OCTOBER 1992

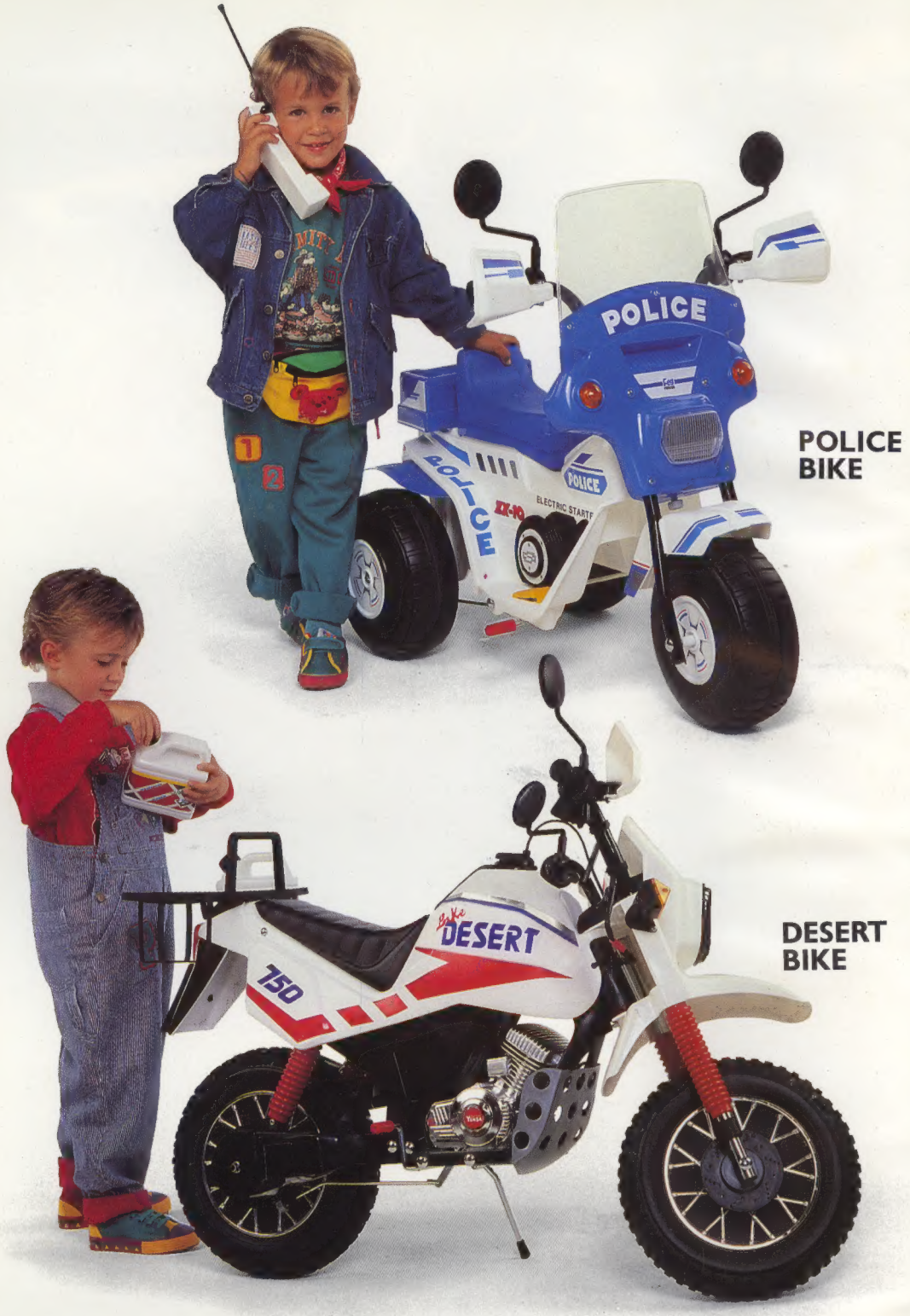
Playthings

For today's merchandisers of TOYS and HOBBIES

Hobby Market Takes A New Turn

Viewpoints: Retailers Keep Fingers Crossed

LOOK AT THIS!



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(Circle No. 1 on Reader Inquiry Card)

Playthings

For today's merchandisers of TOYS and HOBBIES

OCTOBER 1992
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Business staff appears on page 65.

COVER:
In-store merchandising and customer service are key factors in distributing hobby products. Retailers and manufacturers are adjusting to changes in spending patterns by hobby enthusiasts. For more information on the hobby market, please turn to page 28. Cover photo courtesy of Revell-Monogram.

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Calendar

October

13-15, Chicago
Marketplace 92, McCormick Place. Contact: POPAI (201) 894-8899.
13-16, Dallas
Juvenile Products Show, Dallas Apparel Mart. Contact: JPMA (609) 985-3238.
16-18, Hong Kong
Hong Kong International Toys and Gifts Show, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. Contact: Kenfair International Limited (852) 311-8216, (852) 312-0017.
23-27, Rosemont, Ill.
Transworld Housewares and Variety Exhibit, O'Hare Exposition Center. Contact: Transworld Exhibits (708) 446-8434.
25-28, Universal City, Calif.
EPM Entertainment Marketing Conference, Universal City Hilton and Towers. Contact: Riva Bennett (718) 469-9330.
29-Nov. 1, Rosemont, Ill.
Chicago Model Hobby Show, O'Hare Exposition Center. Contact: Larry Sperling (708) 310-1222.

November

2-4, Dallas
Dallas Toy Preview, Dallas Market Center. Contact: DMC (214) 655-6100
27-Dec. 6, Jakarta, Indonesia
International Toy Fair, Jakarta International Trade Center. Contact: K.A. King, BVS Ltd., Sceptre House, 169-173 Regent Street, London, W1R 7FB. Tel. 071 734 4104

December

3, New York
TMA Annual Meeting, 200 Fifth Avenue. Contact: TMA (212) 689-4411.
7-11, Atlanta, GA.
Image World Atlanta, Video Expo, The Cammp Show. Contact: Knowledge Industry Publications (914) 328-9157
14-18, Orlando, Fla.
Image World International, Orange County Convention Center. Contact: Knowledge Industry Publications (914) 328-9157.

January, 1993

5-8, New York
NADI Visual Marketing Show, Passenger Ship Terminal. Contact: NADI (212) 213-2662.
5-10, Orlando, Fla.
Kite Trade Association International Show, Omni Hotel. Contact: Kite Trade Association (415) 764-4908.
7-10, Hong Kong
Hong Kong Toy and Games Fair, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. Contact: HKTDC (212) 838-8688.
7-10, Las Vegas
Winter Consumer Electronics Show, Las Vegas Convention Center. Contact: CES (202) 457-8700.
9-14, N. Yorkshire, G.B.
Harrogate International Toy Fair, Exhibition Centre. Contact: Harrogate International Toy Fair, Ltd., 8-9 Upper Street, Islington, London N1 OPP
17-20, Dallas
Hobby Industry of America Show, Dallas Convention Center. Contact: HIA (201) 794-1133.
17-20, New York
National Retail Federation Annual Convention and Exposition, New York Hilton/Sheraton. Contact: National Retail Federation (212) 563-5113.
23-27, Milan
International Toy Exhibition of Milan. Contact: International Toy Exhibition Segreteria, E.A. Salone Internazionale del Giocattolo, Via Petitti, 20149 Milano, Italy
27-Feb. 2, Paris
Paris International Toy Fair, Paris-Nord Villepinte Exhibition Park. Contact: Kristy Notor (212) 307-8835 or Promosalons (703) 351-5670.
30-Feb. 3, London
British Int'l Toy and Hobby Fair, Earl's Court. Contact: BTHA, 80 Camberwell Rd., London SE5 OEG
31-February 3, Toronto
Canadian Toy and Decoration Fair, Metro Convention Centre. Contact: S. Edmondson, Canadian Toy Manufacturers Association, P.O. Box 294, Kleinburg, Ontario, LOF 1CO

February, 1993

4-7, Las Vegas
The Toy Show, Las Vegas Convention Center. Contact: Interexpo (516) 674-0200.
4-10, Nuremberg
Nuremberg International Toy Fair, Messezentrum. Contact: Spielwarenmesse eG, D-8500, Nurnberg 50.
8-17, New York
American International Toy Fair, 200 Fifth Avenue, 1107 Broadway. 12-15, Javits Convention Center. Contact: Toy Manufacturers of America (212) 675-1141.
13-16, New York
Variety Merchandise Show, Javits Convention Center. Contact: Thalheim Expositions (516) 627-4000.
15-17, New York
MIAA New York Dollhouse and Miniatures Show, Sheraton Centre. Contact: MIAA (614) 452-4541.
16-17, New York
National Mail Order Merchandise Show, New York Hilton. Contact: Charles M. Riotto (908) 246-2212

March, 1993

12-14, Pomona, Calif.
Los Angeles Model Hobby Show, Sheraton Hotel. Contact: RCHTA (800) 255-1250.
13-15, Seattle
Pacific Northwest Toy Association Show, Seattle International Trade Center. Contact: PNTA (206) 441-8442.
14-17, Dallas
Dallas Toy Show, Dallas Market Center. Contact: DMC (214) 655-6100.
27-31, Pomona, Calif.
California Kids Expo, Fairplex. Contact: Phylis St. John (818) 442-1635.

May, 1993

2-5, Naples, Fla.
TMA Annual Summer Conference, Ritz Carlton. Contact: TMA (212) 675-1141.
2-5, Atlanta
American Stationery Fair, Atlanta Gift Market. Contact: Atlanta Gift Mart (404) 220-3000.
4-6, New York
Premium Incentive Show, Javits Convention Center. Contact: Thalheim Expositions (516) 627-4000.
15-18, New York
National Stationery Show, Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. Contact: Patti Brickman (212) 340-9275.

June, 1993

3-6, Tokyo
Tokyo Toy Show, Nippon Convention Center. Contact: Japan International Toy Fair Association, No. 22-4, Higashi Komagata, 4-chome, Sumida-ku, Tokyo, 130, Japan.
5-8, Chicago
Summer Consumer Electronics Show, McCormick Place. Contact: CES (202) 457-8700.
22-24, New York
Licensing '93, New York Hilton Hotel and Towers. Contact: Expocon (203) 374-1411.

September, 1993

20-21, Dallas
Dallas Toy Show, Dallas Market Center. Contact: DMC (214) 655-6100

October, 1993

3-6, Dallas
Juvenile Products Show, Dallas Apparel Mart. Contact: JPMA (609) 985-2878.

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Late Reports

Giant Erector 'Santa Maria' helps celebrate Columbus Day

NEW YORK — A 900-pound replica of Christopher Columbus' sailing ship, the Santa Maria, is being constructed out of thousands of tiny, metal Erector set pieces in time for this year's Columbus Day celebrations.

A crew of French engineers, architects, and builders at the Meccano factory in Calais, just outside Paris, are assembling this historically accurate reproduction. Meccano is the maker of Erector sets worldwide.

The model, standing 15-feet tall, 15-feet long, and made with 13,500 Erector pieces, is due to be shipped to the U.S. for exhibition in New York beginning October 8th. The project was inspired by letters from French schoolchildren to the French toy manufacturer.

Designed by well-known French architect Louis Fleck, the Erector-made Santa Maria is modeled closely after the original.

"We chose the Santa Maria because it is the best known of Columbus' three ships and, of course, Columbus sailed on this ship. Of the Erector set supermodels I have helped design and build, this is undoubtedly one of the most intricate."

The Santa Maria follows in the tradition of Erector's supermodels. Last year, the company built a 40-foot high version of the Eiffel Tower and displayed it at the Wollman Rink in New York City's Central Park. The Erector version of the Gaudi-designed Sagrada Familia cathedral in Barcelona is a 1:50 scale replica which stands 6-feet high, used 10,790 pieces (5,720 pieces plus 5,720 nuts and bolts) and took 330 hours to build from the original drawings of Gaudi.

"The Santa Maria is more grand, more exciting than anything else we've ever done," says chief engineer Francis LeCocq, who has been with Meccano for 23 years. "It is truly a first."

Celebrities toast new Mattel game in Central Park

NEW YORK — Robert Klein and Liz Smith — along with such Broadway and off-Broadway casts as "Forever Plaid" and "Forbidden Broadway" — played the "first-ever" round of the new adult board game from Mattel, ScrutinEyes, in New York's Central Park.

The celebrity game players were playing for a worthy cause. The prize was a donation in the winners' names to the Central Park Conservancy, a non-profit organization dedicated to making Central Park safe and clean.

The event marked the unveiling of Scrutineyes. In the game, teams hurry to identify the hundreds of common and obscure objects on colorful, entertaining, and amusing art panels.

The game was created by Brian Hersch, the inventor of such popular games as Outburst and Taboo.

Optimistic outlook for British Toy Fair

LONDON — Show organizers report early indicatations are that the British International Toy and Hobby Fair will be very successful.

The Fair will be held from January 30 to February 3 at the Earls Court Exhibition Centre.

Major international companies such as Nintendo, Bluebird, Britain's, Fisher-Price, Hornby, Spears, Tomy, Tyco, Waddingtons, and Mamas & Papas have booked space.

Additionally, there is already strong representation from numerous established exhibitors including leisure electronics and model and hobby suppliers, allowing the show attendee the opportunity to see a whole range of products under one roof.

As buyer's needs have become more diverse, the Fair has invited more suppliers of electronic toys, stationery, Christmas/seasonal decorations, and nursery goods as well as services to the toy industry.

1993 marks the 40th anniversary of the British International Toy and Hobby Fair.

32ND SALON INTERNATIONAL DU JOUET

PARIS INTERNATIONAL TOY EXHIBITION

By The Way

FROM 27 JANUARY TO 2 FEBRUARY 1993

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Luxury toys, inexpensive toys, traditional quality toys and novelties, toys from all five continents, from Europe, the United States, from Hong-Kong and Taiwan... every kind of toy is at the International Toy Exhibition in Paris. In 1993, the organizers are expecting 800 exhibitors from 40 countries and 30,000 visitors from 80 countries, over an exhibition area of 70,000 m².

This year again, the dynamic organization of the International Toy Exhibition confirms it as the leading event in the toy sector : 1st of the year, 1st for innovations, 1st priority.

From 27 January to 2 February 1993.

The exhibition is for the trade only. Admission is by invitation, accompanied by a business card. Requests for invitations should be made to :

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Late Reports

Bausch & Lomb, Russ Berrie announce promotion

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Bausch & Lomb announced that it will work with Russ Berrie and Company, a leading manufacturer of stuffed toys and impulse gifts. Bausch & Lomb will distribute its Silsoft contact lenses, designed for infants and children with pediatric aphakia, with a six-inch Russ SoSoft Teddy Bear. The teddy bears will be given to each new pediatric patient at the time the contact lenses are ordered. The stuffed bears will have a hang tag with a special poem dedicated to each child and will be signed by the production personnel at Bausch and Lomb's Silsoft plant. An estimated 9,000 bears will be distributed through 1993.

Bausch & Lomb is one of only two manufacturers in the country that makes a special high-plus power silicone contact lens for children with aphakia — a condition resulting from removal of the eye's natural lense during cataract surgery. Bausch & Lomb makes approximately 4,000 Silsoft specialty lenses a year for aphakic patients.

"As a leader in the contact lens industry, Bausch and Lomb is responsible and committed to providing maximum visual development for children born with cataracts," noted Linda Coffey, senior product manager, Specialty Lenses, Bausch & Lomb. Bausch & Lomb will also donate a four-foot teddy bear to the children's ward in a variety of hospitals across the country that specialize in the care of pediatric aphakia patients.

Camp Snoopy an integral part of Mall of America

BLOOMINGTON, MINN. — Knott's Camp Snoopy is a centerpiece of the Mall of America, the nation's largest retail and entertainment complex, located in Bloomington, Minn.

The new Camp Snoopy was conceived by Knott's Berry Farm, which opened the first Camp Snoopy in its southern California theme park in 1983.

Knott's Camp Snoopy features 23 rides, attractions and venues that feature Charles M. Schulz's Peanuts characters and also reflect the culture and traditions of Minnesota and the upper Midwest.

Many of Camp Snoopy's design elements give visitors the feeling of being outdoors. The nation's largest indoor theme park features nearly 400 towering trees, 30,000 blooming plants, a 70-foot waterfall, sparkling lakes and 100-foot high ceilings crowned with transparent skylights which bring in natural light.

Highlights among the 16 rides include the Peanuts-themed Kite-Eating Tree; the Linus Loop ferris wheel; the Snoopy Bounce; and the Beagle Ballroom.

Additional rides include Paul Bunyan's Log Chute, a four-minute wild water flume and the Ripsaw, a 2700-foot long state-of-the-art roller coaster that rises 50 feet above Camp Snoopy.

Knott's Camp Snoopy also features 15 eateries and seven unique shops including the world's first and only Snoopy Boutique.

The Peanuts characters greet visitors to the park and welcome them to a host of entertainment attractions, including 3-D films, old-time melodramas, bands, animal shows, magicians, and mimes.

Uncle Milton Industries acquires Super Science

CULVER CITY, CALIF. — Uncle Milton Industries, a manufacturer of science and educational toys, and best known as the originator of the Uncle Milton's Ant Farm, has acquired Super Science Limited, a manufacturer of science toys.

Uncle Milton Industries also announced the appointment of George C. Atamian, formerly president of Super Science Limited and developer of the company's products, as the vice president of the new Super Science Division.

WHO THE HELL IS MEL APPEL?

(Circle No. 4 on Reader Inquiry Card)

Financial Reports

SLM International reports record second quarter results

NEW YORK — SLM International reported record operating results for the second quarter and six months ended July 4, 1992.

Revenues for the second quarter increased 15.2 percent to $52,812,000 versus $45,862,000 reported for the comparable period last year. Net income increased 52.6 percent to $4,057,000 or $0.39 per share from $2,659,000 or $0.41 per share for the same period in 1991. Total outstanding shares on July 4, 1992 were 10,525,000 as compared to 6,500,000 on the same date in 1991.

Revenues for the six month period ended July 4, 1992 increased 35.5 percent to $86,706,000 from $63,993,000 a year earlier. Net income for the first half of 1992 was $4,062,000 or $0.39 per share as compared to a net loss of $1,005,000 or $0.15 per share in the comparable 1991 period.

"We are pleased to have realized sales increases in virtually all product categories," David Zunenshine, chairman of the board, commented. "This resulted in record operating results, despite generally cooler than normal North American weather conditions during the second quarter, which adversely affected summer seasonal toy sales. We are particularly encouraged by the performance of our fitness and sports apparel products."

Hasbro posts record second quarter revenues

PAWTUCKET, R.I. — Hasbro reported record revenues for the second quarter ended June 28, 1992.

Revenues for the second quarter reached a record level of $485,958,000 up from $368,501,000 reported in the second quarter of 1991.

Net earnings for the quarter were $22,712,000, compared with the loss of $31,149,000 last year.

Earnings per share were $.26, compared with a loss of $.36 a year ago. Second quarter revenues represent an increase of approximately 20 percent from the 1991 second quarter pro forma revenues of $403,501,000 which also include those of Tonka for the period prior to the acquisition.

Alan G. Hassenfeld, chairman and CEO of Hasbro, attributed the increase to strong domestic sales, with promotional toys showing particular strength.

"Kenner experienced excellent retailer and consumer reaction to its new range of product based on the recently released movie, 'Batman Returns,' while Hasbro Toy received continued acceptance of both its new introductions and ongoing products," said Hassenfeld.

Galoob reports second quarter net loss

SO. SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. — Lewis Galoob Toys reported a reduced second quarter net loss of $4,160,000, or $.44 per share.

That is compared to a net loss of $6,291,000 or $.68 per share, during the same period of 1991. Revenues for the second quarter of 1992 were $28,794,000, 14 percent below 1991 second quarter revenues of $33,517,000. Sales of domestic promoted products in the second quarter of 1992 fell to $11,477,000, compared to prior year, second quarter revenues of $17,968,000. International promoted sales were $11,002,000 down from $12,891,000 in the prior-year period. Sales of non-promoted products in the Toy Boys division rose to $6,315,000, compared to prior-year period sales of $2,658,000. Expenses related to the resignations of former officers were $490,000 in the second quarter of 1992, as compared to $2,381,000 for the same period in 1991.

The quarterly dividend of $782,000 on Company's Depositary Convertible Exchangeable Preferred shares was suspended for the second quarter of 1992, as was previously announced on June 10, 1992.

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Financial Reports

STOCK MARKET PRICES FOR LEADING TOY COMPANIES

Company (Exchange)	Symbol	STOCK PRICE: From 08/07/92 - 09/01/92 High	Low	Close	Change Amt	Change Pct	52-Week High	52-Week Low	EARNINGS/SHARE: Last Fiscal Year	Latest 12 Months vs Preceding 12 Months Change Amt.		Change Pct	5-Year Annual Growth Rate	Profit Margin	P/E: Latest P/E Ratio	DIVIDENDS: Indicated Dvd. Rate Amt.	Yield	Last X-Dvd. Date	FINANCIAL POSITION: Last Fiscal Year Revenue	Earnings	Current Ratio	Last Fiscal Year (Per Share) Long Term Debt	Common Stock Equity	Last Bal. Sheet Date
-	-	$	$	$	$	%	$	$	$	$		%	%	%	-	$	%	-	$ Mil	$ Mil	-	$	$	-
New York Stock Exchange																								
Ames Dept Stores (N)	ADD	.63	.44	.50	-.06	-10.71	2.25	.25	-7.87	3.67	Q	NE	NC	-10.0	NE	.00	.0	02-15-90	2819.4	-282.4	4.2	1.71	-23.15	0192
Carolco Pict (N)	CRC	.88	.63	.69	-.12	-14.81	6.50	.63	-9.44	-9.66	S	NE	NC	-44.1	NE	.00	.0	00-00-00	601.1	-265.1	NA	17.45	-1.26	1291
Dayton Hudson (N)	DH	67.50	61.13	67.50	3.37	5.25	76.25	55.75	3.86	-.91	S	-18.9	11	1.9	17.3	1.52	2.3	08-14-92	16115.0	301.0	1.6	59.34	31.32	0192
Disney Walt Co (N)	DIS	36.75	32.75	34.50	-1.25	-3.50	41.13	25.88	1.20	.14	N	10.8	12	10.1	24.0	.21	.6	07-06-92	6301.8	636.6	NA	3.76	7.43	0991
Fisher Price (N)	FPP	24.50	22.25	24.00	1.37	6.05	24.50	13.13	.40	NC	S	NC	NC	3.3	60.0	.05	.2	07-28-92	373.0	12.2	2.2	3.07	6.98	1291
Galoob Lewis (N)	GAL	3.13	2.75	2.88	-.25	-7.99	6.13	2.75	-1.14	2.62	S	NE	NC	-5.0	NE	.00	.0	06-25-86	150.6	-7.5	2.2	.56	-.18	1291
Gen House (N)	GHW	15.38	14.50	14.63	-.25	-1.68	16.63	11 13	1.20	.25	S	32.9	12	5.3	14.5	.32	2.2	09-10-92	74.0	3.9	3.2	4.62	11.63	1291
Hanson PLC (N)	HAN	19.50	18.63	18.88	-.50	-2.58	22.13	16.88	1.89	-.01	F	-.5	17	13.5	10.0	1.41	7.5	08-31-92	13466.9	1812.3	2.1	8.89	6.06	0991
Huffy Cp (N)	HUF	13.63	12.63	12.88	-.25	-1.90	24.38	12.25	1.52	-.09	S	-6.4	21	2.9	9.8	.30	2.3	10-08-92	678.9	19.8	2.0	8.85	13.79	1291
Jamesway Corp (N)	JMY	3.88	3.38	3.38	-.37	-9.87	7.63	2.75	-.09	1.65	S	NE	NC	-.2	NE	.00	.0	09-25-90	855.1	-1.3	2.4	7.39	8.11	0192
K mart Cp (N)	KM	25.00	22.88	23.75	-.38	-1.57	27.50	19.06	2.02	.03	S	1.6	3	2.5	12.1	.92	3.9	08-07-92	34580.0	859.0	2.1	9.75	14.67	0192
King World Prdtn (N)	KWP	27.13	24.00	24.25	-2.88	-10.62	31.25	21.63	2.38	.05	N	2.1	26	19.6	10.1	.00	.0	09-11-86	475.9	93.2	1.5	.00	6.35	0891
Live Entmnt (N)	LVE	1.75	1.25	1.50	.00	.00	13.75	1.00	-8.95	-2.34	S	NE	NC	-29.6	NE	.00	.0	06-01-89	361.4	-107.1	1.0	9.84	5.01	1291
Mattel Inc (N)	MAT	23.38	21.13	23.38	.25	1.08	25.75	13.21	1.23	.29	S	29.6	NC	7.3	18.4	.20	.9	09-09-92	1621.7	118.1	1.8	1.95	4.62	1291
May Dept Strs (N)	MA	61.00	57.75	59.25	.87	1.49	63.25	46.50	4.02	2.65	S	67.6	12	4.9	9.0	1.66	2.8	08-26-92	10615.0	515.0	3.0	31.74	22.53	0192
Melville Cp (N)	MES	50.25	46.75	50.25	.50	1.01	52.00	38.25	3.20	-.04	S	-1.2	9	3.5	15.4	1.48	2.9	07-20-92	9886.2	346.7	1.8	4.01	19.93	1291
Mitsubishi Bank (N)	MBK	18.25	13.63	18.13	3.88	27.23	22.75	10.50	.24	-.07	F	-22.6	NC	2.4	75.5	.06	.3	03-24-92	30878.0	726.8	NA	1.00	3.77	0390
Penney, JC (N)	JCP	73.50	65.00	69.13	-2.50	-3.49	73.50	47.25	1.97	-.68	S	-19.2	-11	1.6	24.1	2.64	3.8	07-06-92	16201.0	264.0	2.8	28.67	34.30	0192
Quaker Oats Co (N)	OAT	60.50	58.25	59.75	1.25	2.14	75.75	50.25	3.25	.60	F	22.6	-1	4.4	18.4	1.72	2.9	06-22-92	5576.4	247.6	1.4	9.19	11.80	0691
Rubbermaid Inc (N)	RBD	31.75	30.00	31.75	.50	1.60	38.25	26.88	1.02	.02	S	2.1	13	9.8	33.1	.34	1.1	08-10-92	1667.3	162.7	2.7	.17	5.53	1291
Russ Berrie (N)	RUS	28.75	23.63	26.50	-1.75	-6.19	37.00	15.63	1.47	1.58	S	131.7	-5	8.2	9.5	.70	2.6	08-13-92	267.9	22.0	7.2	.20	13.33	1291
Sears, Roebuck (N)	S	42.50	40.00	41.88	1.63	4.05	48.00	32.50	3.71	1.29	S	44.2	-1	2.2	9.9	2.00	4.8	08-25-92	57369.4	1278.9	NA	55.71	40.29	1291
Service Merch (N)	SME	10.00	8.50	8.75	-.50	-5.41	11.75	5.67	.76	.12	S	17.4	NC	2.2	10.8	.00	.0	00-00-00	3399.8	76.1	1.3	7.27	1.06	1291
Sony Corp (N)	SNE	33.88	28.25	33.00	2.50	8.20	41.13	28.25	2.21	.29	Q	15.9	22	3.1	15.6	.32	1.0	03-24-92	29494.7	904.9	1.1	17.88	31.03	0392
Supervalu Inc (N)	SVU	26.13	25.13	25.88	.63	2.50	27.88	23.38	2.78	.71	Q	33.7	15	2.0	9.2	.78	3.0	08-26-92	10632.3	207.7	1.6	8.46	14.35	0292
Toys R Us (N)	TOY	39.25	35.00	37.75	2.12	5.95	39.25	26.00	1.15	.13	S	12.2	13	5.5	31.5	.00	.0	05-30-89	6124.2	339.5	1.2	1.31	8.39	0192
Tyco Toys Inc (N)	TTI	19.63	16.50	19.13	2.88	17.72	23.38	11.31	1.14	2.01	S	NE	4	3.5	10.9	.08	.4	09-03-92	548.7	19.2	2.1	6.77	13.49	1291
Univ Matchbox (N)	UMG	8.38	8.25	8.38	.13	1.58	10.25	3.25	.05	1.41	S	NE	NC	.4	NE	.00	.0	00-00-00	167.5	.6	1.5	1.42	5.01	1291
Vornado Inc (N)	VNO	33.88	32.38	33.50	.75	2.29	34.50	24.50	.93	.67	S	257.7	-2	13.5	36.0	1.68	5.0	08-11-92	75.5	10.2	NA	.00	.79	1291
Wal-Mart Stores (N)	WMT	59.25	56.75	57.25	-.13	-.23	59.88	45.25	1.40	.28	S	22.4	23	3.7	37.4	.21	.4	09-01-92	43886.9	1608.5	1.7	2.85	6.08	0192
Walgreen Co (N)	WAG	39.13	35.75	38.75	2.00	5.44	39.75	28.63	1.58	.20	N	13.0	15	2.9	22.3	.52	1.3	08-13-92	6733.0	195.0	1.8	1.00	8.79	0891
Winn-Dixie Strs (N)	WIN	52.13	46.38	52.13	5.63	12.11	52.13	35.38	2.82	.62	F	28.2	16	2.1	18.5	1.32	2.5	09-09-92	10337.3	216.4	1.6	1.26	11.15	0691
Woolworth Cp (N)	Z	30.88	28.88	30.88	2.00	6.93	32.75	23.50	-.41	-2.32	S	-100.0	NC	-.5	NE	1.12	3.6	07-28-92	9914.0	-53.0	1.6	3.26	15.58	0192
American Stock Exchange																								
Atari Cp (A)	ATC	1.75	1.25	1.38	-.25	-15.34	3.00	1.25	.41	-1.28	S	-100.0	NC	9.2	NE	.00	.0	06-22-87	258.0	23.7	3.0	.84	2.18	1291
Empire of Caro (A)	EMP	6.13	5.13	5.13	-.75	-12.76	7.00	4.13	.68	1.09	S	NE	NC	3.0	6.3	.00	.0	01-31-90	243.1	7.2	1.3	8.52	4.28	1291
Greenman Bros (A)	GMN	5.38	5.00	5.00	-.25	-4.76	6.88	3.13	.71	2.84	Q	NE	NC	2.4	6.1	.00	.0	09-02-86	164.6	3.9	2.6	.14	7.78	0192
Hasbro Inc (A)	HAS	31.50	29.63	30.25	-1.13	-3.60	31.75	16.51	.94	1.01	S	174.1	11	3.8	19.0	.20	.7	11-02-92	2141.1	81.7	1.7	4.41	11.08	1291
Lionel Cp (A)	LIO	.38	.25	.25	-.06	-19.35	.75	.25	-8.19	-4.87	S	NE	NC	-37.3	NE	.00	.0	00-00-00	308.9	-115.3	2.8	.64	-1.91	0192
Ohio Art Co (A)	OAR	55.00	51.00	53.00	-3.00	-5.36	62.50	18.50	5.05	7.18	S	3590.0	NC	5.3	7.2	.24	.5	07-07-92	49.2	2.6	1.6	.97	24.03	1291
Pnsm Entmnt (A)	PRZ	4.00	3.13	3.13	-.75	-19.33	4.25	.81	-1.04	.49	Q	NE	NC	-20.8	NE	.00	.0	00-00-00	10.6	-2.2	2.8	2.43	4.53	0191
Revell-Monogram (A)	RVL	6.38	5.63	6.38	.38	6.33	15.00	5.63	.56	3.82	S	NE	NC	3.3	4.9	.00	.0	00-00-00	106.2	3.5	1.9	5.59	6.42	1291
Viacom Inc (A)	VIA	34.00	31.63	31.88	-.75	-2.30	38.50	27.00	-.41	.26	S	NE	NC	-2.7	NE	.00	.0	00-00-00	1711.6	-46.6	.8	19.30	5.82	1291
Over the Counter																								
Am Greetings A (O)	AGREA	45.63	40.88	45.63	1.25	2.82	45.63	32.50	2.80	.14	Q	5.2	17	6.3	16.1	.86	1.9	08-21-92	1554.0	97.5	3.9	7.13	24.11	0292
Avatar Hldgs (O)	AVTR	26.75	24.50	26.50	1.50	6.00	28.50	20.25	-1.17	-.34	S	NE	NC	-8.3	NE	.00	.0	00-00-00	104.1	-8.6	NA	34.58	20.43	1291
Leisure Concepts (O)	LCIC	6.25	4.88	5.75	.37	6.88	7.00	2.13	.33	.80	S	NE	NC	12.9	11.1	.00	.0	07-01-86	7.0	.9	2.4	.00	2.64	1291
Monarch Avalon (O)	MAHI	1.88	1.88	1.88	.00	.00	2.50	1.50	.05	-.19	F	-79.2	NC	1.4	37.5	.00	.0	06-22-87	6.9	.1	13.0	.00	5.44	0492
Price Stern (O)	PSSP	3.75	3.38	3.50	.12	3.55	4.13	1.50	.22	-.27	S	-60.0	NC	2.4	19.4	.00	.0	00-00-00	37.0	.9	6.9	4.14	3.59	1291
RPM Inc (O)	RPOW	23.88	22.88	23.88	.38	1.62	23.88	18.25	1.10	.07	F	6.8	12	6.2	21.7	68	2.8	07-14-92	552.1	34.5	2.7	3.68	6.64	0591
SLM Internat Inc (O)	SLMI	19.75	15.25	16.50	-2.63	-13.75	24.50	11.00	.92	.85	S	NC	NC	3.8	19.4	.00	.0	00-00-00	164.2	6.3	1.9	1.32	5.11	1291
Topps Co (O)	TOPP	17.00	16.00	16.50	.00	.00	20.25	13.25	1.15	-.01	Q	-.9	12	18.0	14.6	28	1.7	07-13-92	303.2	54.5	1.1	.00	1.16	0292
Wstn Publish Grp (O)	WPGI	19.00	18.25	18.38	-.12	-.65	19.00	9.25	.62	.74	S	569.2	-12	2.5	21.1	00	.0	00-00-00	554.5	13.7	1.6	.00	9.56	0192

All data are based on sources believed to be reliable, but its accuracy is not guaranteed. Every effort will be made to correct errors, when discovered, in future issues.

Footnotes:
N - New York Stock Exchange
A - American Stock Exchange
O - NASDAQ Over-the-Counter
NA - Not Applicable
NC - Not Calculable
NE - Negative Earnings
NM - No Meaningful Figure
Q - First Quarter
S - First 6 Months
N - First 9 Months
F - Fiscal Year

Data and Table Prepared by Media General Financial Services, Inc., Richmond, Virginia 23219

'93 TOKYO TOY SHOW

June 3—June 6 1993

The largest and most prestigious show in Japan. This year, over 230 manufacturers and dealers will be exhibiting their newest products. Plan now not to miss this chance to attend.

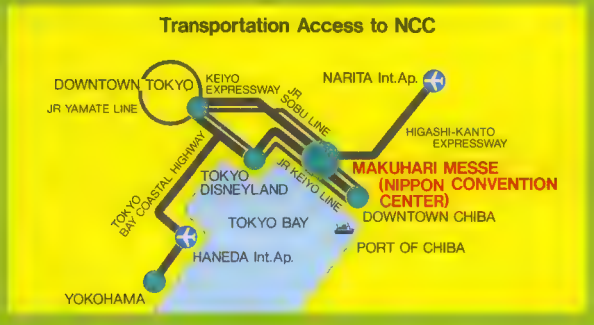
●Items to be exhibited
Battery Operated Toys
Mechanical Toys
Plastic Toys
Games
Character Merchandise
Boy's and Girls' Toys
Dolls
Stuffed Toys

●Attendants
124,085(In 1992)

★If you wish display space, please post your application by December 28th 1992.

We'll be waiting for you at Makuhari!

Transportation Access to NCC



Nippon Convention Center (NCC) is located in MAKUHARI, Chiba City — exactly halfway between Narita Airport and downtown Tokyo. This puts both a quick 30 minutes away by expressway. Also, the Japan Railways (JR) Keiyo Line will soon connect central Tokyo and NCC in 30 minutes. The station (Kaihin Makuhari) is right in front of NCC — a short walk and you're there!

JAPAN INTERNATIONAL TOY FAIR ASSOCIATION
No. 22-4, Higashi-Komagata 4-chome, Sumida-ku, Tokyo 130, Japan
Tel:(03)3829-2521 **Fax:**(03)3829-2549 **Cable:**JAPANTOYSHOW

(Circle No. 6 on Reader Inquiry Card)

We're baaack! The Russ family of products for Fall 1992 with a much bigger consumer ad program than the one you saw in the spring. Twenty of the biggest and best magazines. More than thirty products. Over 100 individual ads. Our phones will be ringing. We'll direct customers to the nearest store. And millions will want to Just say it with a

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PARENTING FamilyCircle seventeen REDBOOK
GLAMOUR People weekly Woman's Day child
New York entertainment weekly Good Housekeeping Sports Illustrated
Southern Living Sassy Ladies' Home Journal Parents
LIFE Better Homes and Gardens COSMOPOLITAN McCall's

(Circle No. 7 on Reader Inquiry Card)

Industry News

BRIEFLY...

HIA aids victims

The HIA has organized an effort to encourage its members and those of other industry associations to help victims of Hurricane Andrew by donating crafts materials. Items to be donated should be sent to: ADRA Warehouse, 3909 East Semoran Ave., Apopka, Fla., 32703.

Pressman boosts chess

Pressman Toys has been named the official sponsor of a national scholastic chess program — the Pressman Chessman — involving thousands of elementary, junior high, and high schools throughout the country, it was announced by the U.S. Chess Federation. Pressman will assist the U.S. Chess Federation in building a program to promote chess playing at the scholastic level.

Fisher-Price acquires juvenile product line

E. AURORA, N.Y. — Fisher Price has announced it has entered into an agreement to acquire a line of youth beds and storage units from The Newborne Company, Inc. of Worthington, Mass. The company's lines — My Little Beds and Underdrawers storage units — are to be sold under the Fisher-Price brand name.

"This acquisition reflects our commitment to entering new areas of business in the juvenile products industry," said Strawn Cathcart, senior vice president of marketing at Fisher-Price. "Youth beds has been emerging as a growing industry within the juvenile products industry over the last two years and we're excited about this new area of opportunity."

The company is scheduled to introduce the new lines at the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association Show. The products will be distributed through toy supermarkets and other outlets.

Rebate plan adds two firms

HOUSTON, TEX. — Kalmbach Publishing Company and International Hobby Corporation are the latest model railroading manufacturers who have agreed to sponsor the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA)/Hobby Shop Christmas Rebate Promotion.

The Hobby Shop Christmas Promotion has attracted leading model railroading equipment manufacturers to its co-op advertising program.

Bachmann Industries and Wm. K. Walthers & Co. Inc. both have sponsored the program since its origination in 1985 and are again involved, along with Microscale Industries and Northwest Short Line.

"In addition to the four very devoted sponsors we've had participating in the program, we're very pleased to add Kalmbach and IHC to our growing family of manufacturers who want to help retailers succeed in attracting new customers," said Jim Myers of Motivators, Inc. Motivators, managing partner of the NMRA Promotion, is a public relations and advertising agency based in Houston.

With six of the most prominent manufacturers in the model railroading industry rebating merchandise to retailers, the dealers have more opportunities to get their advertising expenses back.

"With over 15,000 items covered — many of them 'start-up' type products — retailers can really get someone else to pay for their Christmas advertising," remarks Myers.

This national program offers retail hobby shops a way to recover some or all of its holiday radio advertising expenses. The program's objective of gaining new hobbyists and increasing overall sales has established it as a perennial favorite with hobby shops.

The NMRA Christmas Rebate Promotion pairs competitive manufacturers with retailers in a cooperative effort to promote the hobby of model railroading. Kalmbach and IHC, along with the four other returning manufacturers, will give merchandise credit rebates on purchases made by hobby shops who advertise on their local radio stations during the upcoming 1992 Christmas season.

These shops earn a 5 percent merchandise based on the brand-name products purchased between January 1, 1993 and October 31, 1993 from any or all of the six sponsoring manufacturers.

The promotion is a partnership between local shops selling model railroad equipment; sponsoring manufacturers who make the products; the NMRA and finally the local radio stations, who actually sell the promotion.

According to Dick Maddox of Bachmann Industries, leading model railroad equipment manufacturers have a leadership role in the industry that carries with it a number of responsibilities that include: producing quality products year after year, using the company's capabilities and marketing expertise to guide the future of the industry, and continually promoting the hobby itself.

"Generating sales was not the original motivating force for Bachmann's decision to participate in the NMRA Promotion," says Maddox.

"Industry leaders must sometimes look beyond sales figures and choose to actively assist the retailers with their marketing objectives," he continued.

Retailers interested in this Christmas Promotion should contact their local radio station and have them contact ReCas (800-447-1950 ext. 419) or call Jim Myers at (713) 784-5560. Manufacturers wanting to participate in next year's Promotion can either call or write to Motivators, Inc. at 7171 Harwin, Suite 308, Houston, Texas, 77036-2119.

Steiff U.S.A. hosts National Zoo event

Otmar Dreher (right), president/CEO of Steiff USA congratulates Dr. Michael Robinson, director of the National Zoo, on the opening of the Zoo's new Cheetah Conservation Station..

NEW YORK — Steiff U.S.A. celebrated the opening of the new Cheetah Conservation Station at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. recently by hosting a festival entitled "Cheetah Day at the Zoo sponsored by Steiff."

Steiff designed the one-day event to build awareness of this endangered species'vulnerable situation. Activities included a Cheetah Conservation Puppet Show performed by local high school students.

The show starred the cheetah and a full-line up of Steiff zoo animals. Kids enjoyed having their faces pointed to look like "exotic cats" at the Cheetah Face Painting Station, and at the Arts and Crafts Table, kids made their very own Steiff cheetah masks. Drawings for Steiff stuffed cheetahs were held throughout the day.

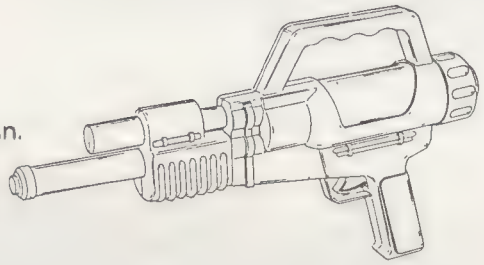
At a private reception for a group of 350 benefactors and friends of the National Zoo, Otmar Dreher, president/CEO, acknowledged that "Steiff USA is very happy to join the National Zoo in celebrating the opening of the Cheetah Conservation Station. Our contribution to this state-of-the-art exhibit represents our commitment to educating people about the importance of preserving wildlife."

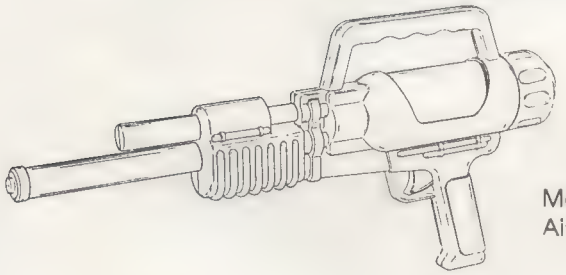
ANNOUNCEMENT

We proudly announce that a new world-wide patent pending "Liquid-safe"™ Water-gun has been invented.

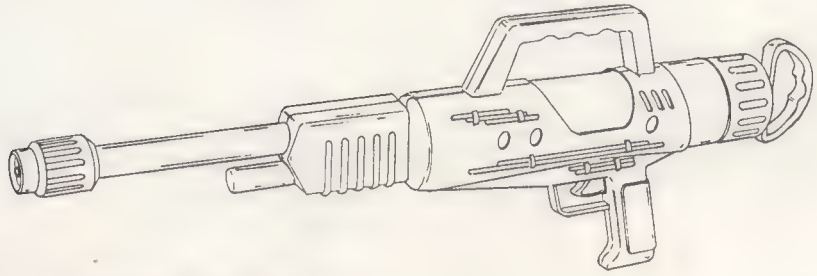
The invented electronic device, world-wide patent pending, installed inside the water-gun can sense the liquid, and stop the water-gun to operate when acid, bleach, urine, alcohol, oil, gasoline, strong alkali...etc, are filled inside the container of the water-gun.

Model : 269
Air Pressure Smart SUPERJET™500 Water gun.





Model : 268
Air Pressure Smart SUPERJET™1000 Water gun.



Model : 267
Air Pressure Smart SUPERJET™2000 Water gun.

World-wide distributor/Agent wanted.

Goldmen Electronic Co. Ltd.

5/F., AGINCOURT IND. BLDG., 428, CHA KWO LING RD., YAU TONG, KOWLOON, HONG KONG.
TELEX : 49765 GOMEN HX CABLE : GOLDMEN TEL : 7276402 FAX : 852-7726385, 852-3486023

(Circle No. 8 on Reader Inquiry Card)

Retail Survey of Best-Selling Toys

Listings based on NPD's TRSTS report of July sales

BEST SELLING SKU'S
RANK BASED ON DOLLAR SALES VOLUME

Last Month	Current Rank	Manufacturer & Description	Avg. Ret. Price
2	1	Nintendo/Super Nintendo	144.05
4	2	Larami/Super Soaker 50	$10.19
**	3	Capcom/Street Fighter II	74.05
3	4	Sega/Genesis	128.68
5	5	Nintendo/Game Boy	80.26
6	6	Larami/Super Soaker 200	29.75
7	7	Nintendo/Challenge Set	89.97
17	8	Ace Novelty/Treasure Trolls Small	3.62
9	9	Kenner/Batman Figure Asst.	5.99
1	10	Larami/Super Soaker 100	20.03
10	11	Nintendo/The Legend of Zelda	48.53
**	12	Kenner/USA Basketball Team Lineup	66.02
**	13	Playmates/TMNT Mutations	7.40
12	14	Sega/MLBPA Sports Talk Baseball	63.54
8	15	Electronic Arts/Bulls vs. Lakers	59.25
15	16	Ace Novelty/Treasure Trolls	7.52
11	17	Intex Recreation/Rainbow Snapset 8X18	16.20
**	18	Sega/Game Gear System (Sonic in-pack)	129.95
16	19	Sega/Game Gear	129.80
**	20	Little Tikes/Cozy Coupe	41.54

**Not in Top 20 Last Month

BEST SELLING SKU'S
RANK BASED ON UNIT SALES

Last Month	Current Rank	Manufacturer & Description	Avg. Ret. Price
1	1	Larami/Super Soaker 50	$10.19
4	2	Ace Novelty/Treasure Trolls Small	3.62
5	3	Kenner/Batman Action Figures Asst.	5.99
2	4	Mattel/Hot Wheels Vehicles	0.89
13	5	SR Mickelberg/Electronic Mini Fazer	2.74
**	6	Playmates/TMNT Mutations	7.40
16	7	Intex Recreation/Economats	1.54
7	8	Ace Novelty/4½" Treasure Trolls Asst. A	7.52
11	9	Mattel/Hot Wheels Asst. B	0.86
9	10	Mattel/Hot Wheels Asst. A	0.86
6	11	Larami/Super Soaker 20	5.85
15	12	Manhattan Products/Bubble Soap	0.49
**	13	Playmates/TMNT Asst. A	3.84
10	14	Playmates/Sewer Spitting Figure Asst.	5.00
**	15	Playmates/TMNT Theme Figure Asst.	2.20
**	16	Intex Recreation/Beach Ball 20"	.77
17	17	Kenner/Terminator 2 Figures	5.05
**	18	Uneeda/Wishnik Dolls 3"	.99
**	19	Playmates/TMNT Figure Asst. B	3.82
**	20	Applause/Magic Troll Babies	4.60

**Not in Top 20 Last Month

BEST SELLING BRANDS
RANK BASED ON DOLLAR SALES VOLUME

Last Month	Current Rank	Manufacturer & Description
3	1	All Mfrs./Nintendo 16-Bit
2	2	All Mfrs./Genesis
5	3	All Mfrs./Nintendo 8-Bit
1	4	Larami/Super Soaker
4	5	All Mfrs./Game Boy
6	6	Mattel/Barbie
7	7	Playmates/Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
8	8	All Mfrs./Batman
10	9	Ace Novelty/Treasure Trolls
9	10	All Mfrs./Game Gear

**Not in Top 10 Last Month

PICK UP THE KOOSH® HOT LINE!

Retailers everywhere are giving rave reviews to the Koosh® brand, calling it the #1 impulse line across the U.S.A.!

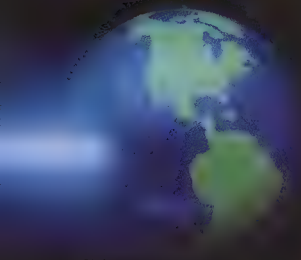
Consumers just can't resist the impulse to pick up these products. And the Koosh feeling and fun makes them hard to put down.

Koosh is now a broad line of exciting hot selling products. And for 1992, OddzOn's new Koosh line is bigger and hotter than ever. Appealing to everyone. Selling day in and day out, month after month. Delivering more dollars per square foot to maximize your profits. **So to get your cash register ringing, pick up the Koosh Hot Line.**

OddzOn.

"Really moving was OddzOn's Koosh Paddles and Koosh Ball"
—**Playthings**

"Koosh Balls are hot sellers"
—**Toy & Hobby Weekly Report**



"Big demand for everything in Koosh"
—**Playthings**

"Koosh Ball has become a classic"
—**Toy Book**

1-800-75-KOOSH

"Koosh Paddles sell out when they arrive in store"
—**World Toy News**

"There are mini-Kooshes, key-ring Kooshes and yo-yo Koosh. If you're a good parent, you'll buy one before they are all sold out."
—**L.A. Daily News**

Koosh Paddleball—included among the Best New Toys of 1991
—**Parents Magazine & Working Mother Magazine**

"We've been selling quite a few Wooshes and Kooshes, both by OddzOn. We sell anything OddzOn sends us."
—**Toy and Hobby Weekly Report**

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(Circle No. 9 on Reader Inquiry Card)

What's Selling

Twin Cities

Irene Clepper

Retailers cash in on back-to-school

Back-to-school lifted August from the summer slump in toy, game and hobby sales caused partly by the recession and partly by the coldest summer in Minnesota history.

At the same time, retailers in the newly opened Mall of America benefited from traffic that hit the one million mark the first week, and before school started, was topping 200,000 some days. Among the newest additions to the megamall is Service Merchandise, the Nashville Tenn.-based catalog showroom chain, which will also be opening more stores—probably five—in the Twin Cities.

Consumers are hesitant about spending money, "unless they see substantial price cuts or, in the case of school items, feel that the expenditure is necessary," one retailer commented.

Another retailer who agreed said, "I expanded my back-to-school section a lot this year, including 'educational' items for pre-schoolers, and instructed sales associates to talk with parents about the value of early learning."

As a result, Texas Instruments' items were doing well, along with Ravensburger. One store was featuring an attractively priced easel from Amav—at $19.99, it came with paper, markers, colored chalk, chalk eraser, brush, paints and a tray to mix them in.

Another retailer included sports bags in the back-to-school section. MacGregor bags were under $8 and Wilson's under $25. Ero's Batman backpack at $19.99 was popular—along with Thermos Batman lunchbox ($4.99) and a wide range of other licensed lunchboxes, such as Aladdin's Beauty and the Beast, 101 Dalmatians and Treasure Trolls, all for under $5.

Back-to-school also meant watches and barrettes, combs and ponytail holders. One national chain created traffic with two week-long specials on 70-page spiral notebooks for 16 cents.

For students needing a little relief from classes, there were: Notebook Games from Tyco, at under $6; Nerf Slingshots and Turbo Screamer footballs, for under $10.

One chain was making its bid for school purchase traffic by matching its prices on Pentech and Paper Mate pens to fit the mail-in rebate offers so that customers could have the pens for free. Along with this move as a trio of special coupons offering Paper Mate jumbo markers for 59 cents, American pencils (10) for 39 cents and a pencil sharpener for 29 cents.

Economy forces discounts

Sale prices continued to be standard operating procedure as merchants coped with the tendency of consumers to wait-and-see about the economy in general and their jobs in particular. Murray boys' 20-inch all-terrain bikes were advertised at $110 with a match-any-price guarantee. Playskool "first bikes" could be had for under $30 and Fisher-Price boys' or girls' Tough Trikes were going at under-$25.

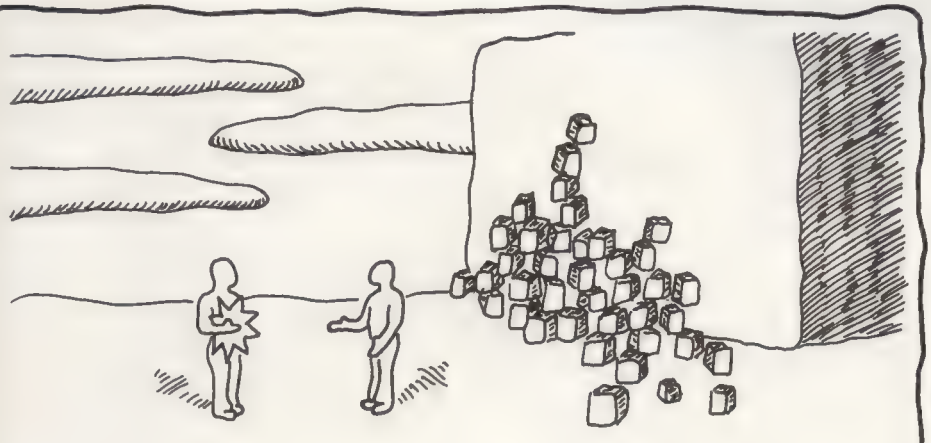
"You have to head up an ad with 'percent off' or put 'sale' signs on enough displays in the store or you won't catch customers' attention," a retailer emphasized.

His statement was borne out in many stores, where, for example, Crayola crayons were two for $1 and all Crayola sets were 25-percent off; Ninja Turtles Mutations were on sale at $5.99; and Golden Books were two for $5.

Nintendo's Game Boy was marked down to $79.99, with its software as low as $27.99. Sega Genesis and Super NES were battling it out at $130 and $140 respectively, with selected games in the $25 range for Genesis and $48 for Super NES.

In the area of special promotion, one chain was reaping sales from Thomas the Tank merchandise, tying in everything from floor puzzles ($4.40) to board games ($12) and lunch boxes ($9.60) with kids clothing, priced from $12.80 to $28.80. Thomas the Tank Engine even made a special appearance at two metro area stores.

In line roller skates have become a have-to-have and Barbie is among those wheeling away on them. For less than $10, the ever-popular Barbie and friends appeared—and disappeared—from toy shelves, wearing Rollerblades that flashed and sparked. Like all serious skaters, the Mattel figures had kneepads and elbow pads and wore hip packs.



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(Circle No. 10 on Reader Inquiry Card)

Atlanta

Letitia Sweitzer

Trolls keep heads above water

Prerequisite school supply sales and summer clearance perks both spelled success for late third quarter sales. School started even earlier this year in the metro Atlanta area, sending shoppers scurrying for back-to-school supplies on the heels of family vacations. Must-haves on the school supply list included crayons, notebooks and pens; arts and crafts supplies also figured heavily in sales. Kenner Spirograph for $9 was a hit as was Kodak's Art Center, also for $9. Tyco's Travel Magna Doodle was still selling out regularly.

Every school child had to have a new backpack. Popular this month were 101 Dalmatians, Minnie Mouse, Mickey Mouse and Batman motifs. Theme character lunch kits were topping the list. Popular ones by Thermos and Aladdin include Batman, 101 Dalmatians, Beauty and the Beast, and Barbie.

The 101 Dalmatians' black and white spots covered more than backpacks. Several shoppers purchased almost the complete line — Dalmatian lunch box, backpack, coloring book, pocketbook, and plush figures. Mattel's Dalmatian plush sell for $15-20.

Troll sales kept soaring. Kids wanted to make sure they arrived at school with the latest troll. Wishnik Trolls still sold fast as well as Ace Novelty Trolls. Russ' Troll Jewelry was a gem at the check-out.

In the doll category, Mattel's Barbie held the lead. The Mermaid Barbie for $20 and Baby Blade for $33 were favorites.

Action figures remained key players in sales. One mother remarked that her son was "crazy about Batman Figures even though he's never seen the movie." Kenner and Toy Biz Batman Figures moved steadily. Playmates Turtles keep moving too. Tyco Crash Dummies and Accessories were also a smashing success.

Barney by Lyon's Group remains a hit. The lovable TV character's video cassettes, ranging in price from $13-15, sold well, as did Barney Coloring Books for $2, and Plush Barney Figures and T-shirts. Barney Goes to School video cassette for $15 has been selling well this time of year.

The Games Gang's Balderdash board game captured the teen crowd. This game was selling out at one local chain. Milton Bradley's Yahtzee for $6 also continued its longterm success.

Playskool's Busy Balls for $20 were rolling, and Fisher-Price's Cash Register for $15 was the real cash register jingle. Hedstrom's Pogo Ball was selling out at a reduced price of $9. Lego Systems Value Packs were going well at $10 per pack.

Hobbies: Stamps pick up

R/C cars have been fading this summer while R/C airplane sales were on the rise. A lot of starter kits indicated new customers were getting into the hobby, although some of them were the former car enthusiasts. Durplane or Carl Goldberg were the favorite starter planes, good kits and easy to build. Customers could be ready to fly from $250 to $400. Plastic model kits, usually steady sellers, have experienced an unusual spurt for the summer. Model cars were the most solid sellers for one dealer who mentioned the AMT Dodge Viper as a best seller for $9.50. Science fiction kits including Star Trek and Batman motifs have also boosted plastics sales. According to one area hobby dealer who specializes in trading and collectibles, stamp trading and collecting has picked up. Many parents of younger age children are looking for an inexpensive and educational hobby to help their children get into.

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(Circle No. 11 on Reader Inquiry Card)

What's Selling

Chicago

Ted J. Rakstis

Trolls, Soakers continue to move

At Labor Day, trolls and Larami's Super Soaker line continued to dominate the retail sales scene. And owners and buyers expected the two categories to remain strong through the Christmas season.

The buyer for a three-store suburban toy chain reported brisk activity in the Norfin troll line at $7 to $36. In an outlying community, the manager of a specialty shop said that she sold out all her Norfin stock. "We placed a big reorder," she said. "Trolls look like a really strong Christmas number."

The owner of three Chicago-area toy stores added: "We've been carrying trolls by both EFS and Russ Berrie. Now, however, we're still getting a good supply from Berrie but haven't seen anything from EFS in the last two months.

"For the holiday season, we intend to buy only the Berrie line. Its new collection of international trolls looks particularly interesting.

"I think we'll all be trolled out by Christmas, but this is the first year that they've been effectively mass-marketed. Trolls should sell through the rest of 1992. However, I'm not so sure about next year."

Ace's trolls make their mark

A wholesale toy buyer who sells to small accounts was sticking with Ace Novelty's Treasure Trolls. They continue to score at an average $3.99 and $7.99 retail. He, too, anticipated a solid troll Christmas.

"As for Super Soakers," the buyer added, "we waited 60 days to get a shipment of the 20 and 30 models but couldn't get any 50s. The 20s are doing well at about $7.79, and the 30s are holding firm at $9.99." Retail reports on Super Soakers were also upbeat.

A few new winners were emerging. Playmobil's reissued Circus line received rave notices from several dealers.

"The entire Circus selection is going at $8 to $80," said one merchant. "At $14, the leading item is the Magician." The suburban chain buyer indicated that her best trade was coming from the Big Top at $93.

Playmobil, she said, has another apparent strong entry in its new Winter Sports line.

"We're waiting for its release in September," the buyer observed. "We think our top Christmas sellers will be that, the Playmobil Circus, trolls, and Step 2's all-in-one kitchen at $129 and the easel at $85."

Ertl's Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends, selling in a $4 to $10 range, scored high with nearly everyone who was contacted.

Batman earns lukewarm response

Reports on Batman trade were mixed. A buyer for a major Midwest toy wholesaler called Kenner's figures "a red-hot number" among his chain accounts. They were moving at $4.95 to $5.95. Ertl's line of Batman vehicles also was in demand and on allocation.

Among independent dealers, however, Batman business was soft. Two sources noted some interest in Applause's Batman figure at about $10, but neither planned to reorder it. Ertl sales were graded as "just fair," and Kenner's line was scarcely mentioned.

The buyer also said that trolls are "starting to slow down" among the chains because "there's too much product out there." That's a rare negative on trolls in this market. Also, he said that GI Joe is "red-hot and on allocation."

Knockoffs garner a share

"We're selling a lot of the Mega-Pulsar Automatic Gun, a Taiwanese import, at $14.99," the three-store entrepreneur reported. "It's quite similar to Kenner's Nerf Master Blasters.

"Also ball-and-mitt catch games are popular. Scatch from Dry Branch goes for $18, but we're doing bigger business in the knockoffs at $7 to $10.

"In addition, we're having unusually good — and unseasonable — sales of Brio wooden trains. The fall promotional set at $39.95 is the best number."

The small-account, wholesale buyer cited a landslide demand for Ultra Fleer Series II baseball cards at $1.49 per package.

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"We sold 16 cases, or 11,520 packs of cards, in 10 days," he said.

"Football cards are hot. The leader is Topps' Stadium Club selection at $1.75. We're also seeing good sales in Upper Deck sets at $1.25, Fleer at 99 cents, and Topps' regular collection at 55 cents."

Hobbies: King Kong returns

The owner of a large store reported that his hottest item was Monogram's reissue of a King Kong kit that first appeared 30 years ago. It was going for $7.95.

His leading R/C number was MRC/Tamiya's Stadium Blitzer at $98.95. The dealer said that he had sold out the Matchbox three-piece Richard Petty STP die-cast set at $15. Meanwhile, Matchbox had another sales-pacer in its $12 transporters line.

Philadelphia

Bill Storm

Batman sparks Halloween hopes

With most of the big-money outdoor summer equipment items stored away, beach and park toys were still much in demand with late vacationers. There was still lots of action with the lower priced Super Soaker by Larami at $6.99 and with the Zap-It water gun at $4.98, by Playtime.

Kites moved well with Go Fly A Kite at $12 and up, and Peterbilt, at $50, rating sellouts.

Outdoor toys take to the beach

Wham-O's Frisbees moved briskly with the 165 Grand model flying on every beach and park. It was apparent that many Frisbee tossers were adding their dogs to the fun, having them chase and return the Frisbees in open fields. Kenner's Nerf Slingshots at $17.90 and Koosh Balls and paddles at $4.98 saw several sellouts.

For beach sun and fun, there was a constant demand for pails and shovels, many by Empire in the $1.50 range. Goggles and face masks by Ero at $1.99 upward moved briskly.

Demand for Batman and his cronies slowed a bit, dealers stated, but figures of the group at $1.99 remained popular and toy dealers weren't discouraged. "I'm betting a lot on Batman for Halloween business. He'll be very strong with an early season start" a long-time dealer predicted.

In the doll line, Skateboard Barbie by Mattel at $12.99 proved as popular as previous Barbies, but the big rave, from a large independent in an adjoining upper income county, was for Madame Alexander. They've always been popular at this shop, he stated, "but now I just can't keep them in stock. I've sold out several times and demand continues strong." The International series at $51 is a strong seller.

Troll dolls by Norfin from $3.98 to $9.98 moved well, as did Kenner's basketball figures at $5.50. Mattel's All-Pro hockey figures at $30 continued here as a strong staple as did sports collector cards by Topps, Fleer and Upper Deck.

AMP head-set radios at $20 upward rated well, particularly at inner-city shops. Games in demand include Monopoly by Parker at $13, Scattergories by Milton Bradley at $29, International Games' Uno at $4, Travel Outburst by Western Publishing at $9.98, and Travel Monopoly by Parker Brothers at $10.98.

Hobbies: Trains draw traffic

Brio trains continued strong with $150 for the set and $5 for the railroad cars. Thomas the Tank railroad cars by Ertl were selling out at one hobby shop from $3.98 to $5.98.

Lionel "O" gauge rated well with the complete line in demand. Customer comments have encouraged retailers to start early with initial displays for this coming Christmas season.

continued

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(Circle No. 13 on Reader Inquiry Card)

What's Selling

Boston

Irving Roberts

Batman figures vie with Turtles

The scenario here may be improving—at least in the toy area. Dealers generally report a "moveable" August as the back-to-school season approached. The accent was on moving out summer items and bringing in ready cash for the drive into the year's last quarter.

Dealers say they "moved a little of everything," which meant both outdoor and indoor items. However, outdoor inventory has been low to begin with, and dealers fortunately had substantial stocks of already-proven popular items.

So cash registers were kept ringing in sales of Batman Returns in a wide variety of poses and garbs; Mutant Ninja Turtles, both new and old; Kenner's hot Nerf group; Larami's long-range soakers and their clones; and the throw-and-catch mitt items paced by Drybranch's Scatch. Not to neglect Barbie in all her costumes led by Totally Hair Barbie.

Prices moved in a widening range as stores pushed for more traffic. Batman Returns and the newer group of Mutant Turtles competed for No. 1 spot with several stores singling out the Turtles, "particularly the bad guys." Figures in both groups sold most at $5.99, although the Turtles figures varied. Mutatin'Ralph and Raphael were moving at $7.99, Ralph the Mag at $5.99, Powerliftin' Don at $5.99 and Mutatin' Rocksteady at $7.99.

The Batman Returns group also found action with Blast Jet at $15.99, Projector Gun at $6.99, 3-D Board Game, and Batman PlayDoh Playset at $12.99. Bat Ski Boat was saled at $14.99.

Larami's Super Soakers, with 50 and 200 still most wanted, sold well at $9.99 and $24.99. Stores were offering price leaders in this area. G.I. Joe was also in the running with its Eco Warriors. The Patriot Missile Launcher sold at $12.99 along with Eco Striker at $1.99 and Barracuda at $8.99.

Nerf sales are anything but soft

One store had Nerf Bow 'N Arrow at $24.99 and another at $19.99 as proof of the wide variance in some price areas. Nerf Slingshot was $14.99 in one, $9.99 in another. Blast-A-Matic generally listed at $9.99. Several dealers felt that the market here was slowing a bit after a good run lasting many months. Nerf's Turbo Screamer was still a hot item at $9.99, and Just Toys' Spiral Whistle Ball made a shrill sound at $7.99. Drybranch's Reach Volley was good at $7.99.

Newer items worth mentioning included Toy Max's Talking Troll at $7.99 and Mattel's Baby Rollerblade at $29.99. Ertl's Blurp Balls at $7.99 also found interest. Also worth noting was the reappearance of Creepy Crawlers by Toy Max — a quick sellout which, as one leading wholesaler pointed out, might bring back some other old favorites to the best seller scene.

Retailers uncertain about fourth quarter

Dealers feel that the overall sales picture will be difficult to forecast in remaining months of the year and expect customers to remain cautious, particularly in an election year that has failed to offer solid bases for an improved economy. Most stores plan to keep their inventories "at a workable level," as one dealer put it.

Among hobbies, trading cards are holding up well as are die-casts by Revell/Monogram, Matchbox, and AMT/Ertl. Not much going on in R/C.

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(Circle No. 14 on Reader Inquiry Card)

San Francisco

Robert Wanderer

Super Soakers trigger debate

Great debate among San Francisco Bay area toymen: Will Super Soakers still be good for pre-Christmas selling, or should we cut the price and close them out now? On the one hand, while the sensational Larami water guns have tumbled from the number-one spot, they were still moving respectably; as one toyman put it, "If you've been squirted, you want to be able to get one and squirt back."

On the other hand, some retailers stopped ordering replacements, particularly small stores leery of overstock; a grocery chain selling them abruptly slashed the price in half and closed them out, seeing them as a summer item that wouldn't last as autumn leaves began to fall.

Among stores still selling Super Soakers, the mid-size 50 model was clearly the most popular, at $14.99. It offered a greater squirting range than the $2.98 mini, the $7.99 20, and the $9.99 30, without the uncomfortably heavy weight of the $24.99 100 and the $29.99 200. Some dealers were dropping the larger models.

Movie-related figures get mixed reviews

Among figures, Kenner's Terminator 2 moved at $6.99, led by John Connor on his motorcycle. Kenner's Batman topped one store at $7.98, but other retailers saw Batman sales sag after an initial peak "because the movie didn't have legs." Hasbro's GI Joe was good at $4.49, led by the new Ninja Force figures, particularly Storm Shadow. The new larger GI Joe (actually, the size of the original many years ago) attracted interest but, at $20-25, few sales.

Tyco's California Roller Baby, a battery-operated 16-inch doll that actually skates, rode strong TV advertising to good sales at $39.987.

Playmates scored with the Transformer-like Turtle Mutations, especially Splinter, at $9.99.

One toyman was impressed with the Little Tikes Basketball Set at $59.98. "It's way in the back of the store, not on display, yet people ask for it every day."

Trolls remained top sellers, with new

Frankenstein and other "Halloween trolls" going at $3.49-6.49. Among regular trolls, Norfin items were particularly good at points like $2.98 and $5.98, and on up to $69.98, and the Treasure Trolls from Ace moved smartly at $4.98 and $10.98.

One neighborhood store with an elaborate Erector bridge in its window found good interest in Erector, $14.99 to $169.

Barbie moves at all points

One suburban outlet dropped Totally Hair Barbie to $11.88, and garnered strong sales, particularly for the brunette version, "since it's been years since we've had a Barbie that wasn't blonde." The limited edition Benefit Ball Barbie went out fast at $49.98, with one woman buying one for each of her six granddaughters, and the rest of the shipment of 24 going to Barbie collectors.

Nerf scored with the Turbo Football, the Bow and Arrow, and the Slingshot at $14.98. The Master Blaster at $24.98 was a quick sellout in one neighborhood store.

Other retailer mentions: Parker's Grape Escape game at $27.98, the Playskool dollhouse at $89.99, Lego's Pirate and Castle systems, the Turtle sandbox $46.98 outselling the larger one at $64.98, Crash Dummies still holding (or to be more exact, still falling apart), the Woosh Flying Ring from OddzOn at $7.95 and Koosh Paddles at $15.95, Mattel's Polly Pockets Compact Set at $8.99, and two books from Klutz Publications — "Braids and Bows" at $17.99 and "Foxtail" at $9.99.

In R/C, Nikko scored with the Pocket Flyer at $265.98. The new, bigger, Super Fast Traxx also zoomed out at $124.99..

Los Angeles

Joanne Gamlin

Back-to-school spells sales

Colorful backpacks and notebooks by Sanrio, pro-like drawing supplies by Alex and snappy pencil boxes by Empire. And, for a playful note, throw in Ace Novelty's Treasure Trove trolls in two sizes, retailing at $4.99 and $9.99, respectively. By mid August, on-to-school-we-go toys and supplies were everywhere.

Back-to-nursery school, in fact, was on the mind of a shopper in a toy store, part of a five-unit chain, that boasted an attractive return-to-the-classroom window display. Although she looked at Nylint's Peel Outs truck ($12.95), she bought a Random House book ($2.25). Her selection: "Trouble for Thomas and Other Stories," part of the Thomas the Tank Engine license, drawn from the British-born "Shining Time Station" public TV show.

That books can be engines that pull other toys along was affirmed by a Glendale-based, two-store retailer. "One out of three sales in our headquarters store is for books," he revealed, "including coloring and novelties." That store recently expanded its book nook.

A Klutz book, "Braids & Bows," that instructs females on how to style their hair and supplies barrettes to complete the job, was a top seller for a near Malibu independent. "The beauty of this $17.95 best-seller is that it appeals to females of all ages," confirmed the owner. She named as a second good book seller Creativity for Kids' "Create Your Own Book," which does what it says, at $12.95. Still, she could hardly contain her excitement at receiving her first shipment of Chimeric's Ill-Us-Story which, for $20, allows a person to become a published writer or artist.

Other sales pacers for this independent? Cap Toys' bubble swords, bubble jump ropes and bubble guns at $9.95, and Radio Flyer's covered wagon — it holds a kid — at $89. The owner emphasized that her store also does good business in wooden toys at $3.55 to $21.95 from Skid Row Access, a non-profit outfit that hires the homeless.

Scorching temps sell out pools

Icky, sticky, sweltering temperatures, held over from July, resulted in a run on pools for a unit of a San Diego-based chain. "Manufacturers were unprepared for the long seige of boiling hot weather," complained a spokesperson, who pointed out that he had already sold out his last 12- by 36-inch pool from SLM. Yet another toy chain store still had 60-inch pools from Empire and Intex, at $11.88 and $19.60, respectively.

Meanwhile, reports in this column of the death of demand for Batman figures were clearly exaggerated. While popularity of Batman figures themselves shrank, probably reflecting the relatively poor performance of the '92 movie, demand for sexy Catwoman figures was red hot, according to two retailers. "Kenner's Catwoman figures at $7.99 are our number-one seller," asserted a spokeswoman for a Downey independent. Agreeing with the assessment, a second retailer argued that "interest in Kenner's Catwoman and Robin figures at $7.95 in our stores has nothing to do with the flick; rather, it stems from people who are genuine collectors."

Beverly Hills kids generate demand

In addition, both retailers commented on the popularity of Mattel's new teenage dolls, based on the TV serial, "Beverly Hills 90210."

Playmates' Mutations Turtles figures at $9.99 were another sales powerhouse for the Downey independent. The national chain advertised the figures at $5.99. Besides mentioning the Mutations, the other retailer, from an Orange County-based group, named Toy Biz's X-Men and X-Force figures at $6.95 as heavyweights.

At a plush speciality unit of the above group, North American Bear's Muffy and her ample wardrobe charmed customers at retails of $17 to $80. Perhaps celebrating the arrival of the 101 Dalmatians video, plush versions of the spotted dogs from Applause and Fine Toys popped up in both a specialty chain and a supermarket chain.

As for Nintendo cartridges, Street Fighter II was mowing down all competitors, according to a spokesman for a national chain and the San Diego-based retailer. "I had to struggle to get my hands on it," remarked a spokesman for the first chain which tags the cartridge at $64. "At $74.99, Street Fighter II led everything else in my store," said the San Diego-based dealer.

Hobbies: Ertl leads the way

Up against a moribund local economy in a state that has been paying its bills with IOUs since July 1, a Lakewood hobby dealer said business was slow. He named Ertl's plastic models with movie themes (Batman, Star Trek and Star Wars) as acceptable sellers at $11.50. Auto buffs, he added, retain their affection for Ertl's Chevy '64 Impala model at $8.99.

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(Circle No. 15 on Reader Inquiry Card)

News

Airfare, hotel savings announced for Toy Fair

NEW YORK — Toy Manufacturers of America has announced that exclusive hotel rates and airfares will be available for attendees of the 1993 American International Toy Fair.

Travel Planners, Inc., specialists in reduced rate travel and hotel programs for trade shows, will be coordinating the arrangements.

"This year, Travel Planners has once again obtained drastically reduced hotel rates and airfares for 1993 Toy Fair attendees," says Doreen Guerin, Toy Fair show manager. "Tremendous savings are now available on TWA, the official show airline, and at an extended list of popular New York hotels."

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Travel Planners has a package to suit every budget from moderate to deluxe accommodations. Substantially reduced rates are available at all Toy Fair featured hotels and they can also assist attendees with special suite arrangements at participating hotels. When attendees guarantee their arrival on their credit card or with one night's deposit, payable to Travel Planners, Inc., they will receive a written confirmation.

Exclusive airfare discounts are available on TWA. Attendees can save up to 45 percent off on TWA fares, although some restrictions do apply. Travel Planners can also assist travelers with the lowest fares available on American and Delta airlines. In addition, Travel Planners has made arrangements with Amtrak to offer 10 percent off any available Amtrak fare, to or from New York City, excluding the Auto Train and Metroliner.

The 90th Annual American International Toy Fair will be held in New York City from February 12-15, 1993 at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, 11th Avenue between 34th and 39th streets and from February 8-17 at 200 Fifth Avenue (Toy Center South), 1107 Broadway (Toy Center North) and surrounding locations.

Kay-Bee assists Hurricane Andrew victims

PITTSFIELD, MASS. — Kay-Bee is donating over $130,000 worth of toys and games to the young victims of Hurricane Andrew.

Kay-Bee, which operates 11 stores in the Miami area, is working with the American Red Cross to deliver the toys to families in need.

"Our business is all about serving children and families throughout the country," said Ron Staffieri, president and C.E.O. of Kay-Bee Toy Stores. "We hope our contribution, in the face of the devastation and rebuilding taking place in South Miami, will help bring a few smiles to the faces of many children affected by Hurricane Andrew."

Two trailer-loads full of 55,000 toys from Kay-Bee will include: basketballs, coloring books and crayons, stuffed animals, dolls, and many other favorites from all the leading toy manufacturers.

"Thanks to the fantastic organizational efforts of our associates, merchandise is on its way from our distribution center in Danville, Kentucky," said Staffieri.

"We are very grateful to Kay-Bee Toy Stores for their generous donation of the items we desperately needed," said Carol Williams of the American Red Cross. "Activity toys such as coloring books and crayons as well as basketballs for the hoop that are set up in tent cities, will be much appreciated."

Two Kay-Bee stores that were damaged by the storm remain closed for repairs.

Kay-Bee is the nation's second largest toy retailer, with over 1,300 stores in the United States and Puerto Rico. Kay-Bee is a division of Melville Corporation.

SLM Int'l purchases bicycle helmet company

NEW YORK — SLM International announced that it has agreed to purchase Innova-Dex Sports of Montreal.

Innova-Dex Sports is a small Canadian manufacturer of premium-priced bicycle helmets, which markets its products under the Leader brand.

This acquisition is in line with SLM's corporate strategies, and will complement the company's existing product lines.

"As a world leader in the manufacturing and selling of hockey helmets, the addition of bicycle helmets to our line is a natural extension of our CCM brand and a counter-seasonal extension of product we understand," said Howard Zunenshine, SLM's co-chief executive officer, said. "As more states and provinces mandate the wearing of bicycle helmets, we will be positioned to take advantage of this growth opportunity."

SLM International designs, develops, manufactures and markets a range of toys and sporting goods worldwide using a variety of well-known trademarks, as well as licenses for popular children's characters.

Absolute Entertainment acquires Imagineering Inc.

GLEN ROCK, N.J. — Absolute Entertainment, video game publisher of Sega and Nintendo software, has announced the acquisition of Imagineering Inc., independent software developer.

Imagineering has been associated with Absolute since 1986, and is the developer of all Absolute-published games, as well as titles for other Nintendo and Sega licensees, including THQ, GameTek, and Acclaim.

Woody Browne forms licensing, consulting firm

CHERRY HILL, N.J. — Woody Browne, a corporate marketing veteran and current president of the Licensing Industry Merchandisers Association (LIMA) has formed a licensing and marketing consulting company called Building Q.

Based in Cherry Hill, N.J., the company provides a package of strategic services to support the identification, evaluation, selection and impact of licensing activities for marketers of consumer products. The firm's clients include organizations in both children and adult product categories such as: Nestle USA, Tsumura, Fada Industries, Tara Toys, and TCA Group.

With an extensive background in corporate marketing and as a three-term president of LIMA, Browne has played a fundamental role in the development and promotion of the $66 billion licensing industry.

In the early 80's, Browne developed a proprietary analytic model for evaluating properties which has served as the foundation for several important licensing projects over the past decade. The Building Q service platform uses this analytic model along with information provided by a highly developed intelligence network to ensure that a marketing organization has strategic advantages in all areas of their licensing activities.

J.A. Roth named 'Swans Crossing' agent

LOS ANGELES — J.A. Roth & Associates has been retained as the licensing agent for "Swans Crossing" merchandise.

"Swans Crossing" is a nationally syndicated, daily live-action serial from preteens and teens, airing weekdays on 145 stations. The program's story focuses on a group of 12 middle-schoolers who live in an Eastern Seaboard village, home to some of America's richest and most privileged families.

After only its first eight weeks on the air, "Swans Crossing" has developed a loyal fan following among pre-teen/teen girls and is rated among the top four nationally-syndicated programs in its target audience category — girls, ages 6-11.

"Our primary focus will be to arrange licensing agreements with apparel, publishing, stationery, and supplemental toy manufacturers," said Jay Roth, president of J.A. Roth & Associates, Inc. "We anticipate many of these different products to be introduced in Summer 1993 in time for the back-to-school market and the Christmas season."

Roth expects such products as calendars, diaries, posters, t-shirts, sweatshirts, boardgames, swimwear, and sleeping bags to be part of the merchandising mix for Swans Crossing."

Designworks/USA, an international design consultancy firm based in Newbury Park, Calif., has been retained as the authorized design firm for "Swans Crossing." The firm will be responsible for building a strong license identity and image strategy that will convey a total and consistent merchandising personality. Designworks/USA also will establish style guidelines and offer assistance to licensees in product design as well as coordinate the look of the many licensed products and categories for greater retail impact.

The firm will work in conjunction with J.A. Roth & Associates in developing the Swans Crossing property.

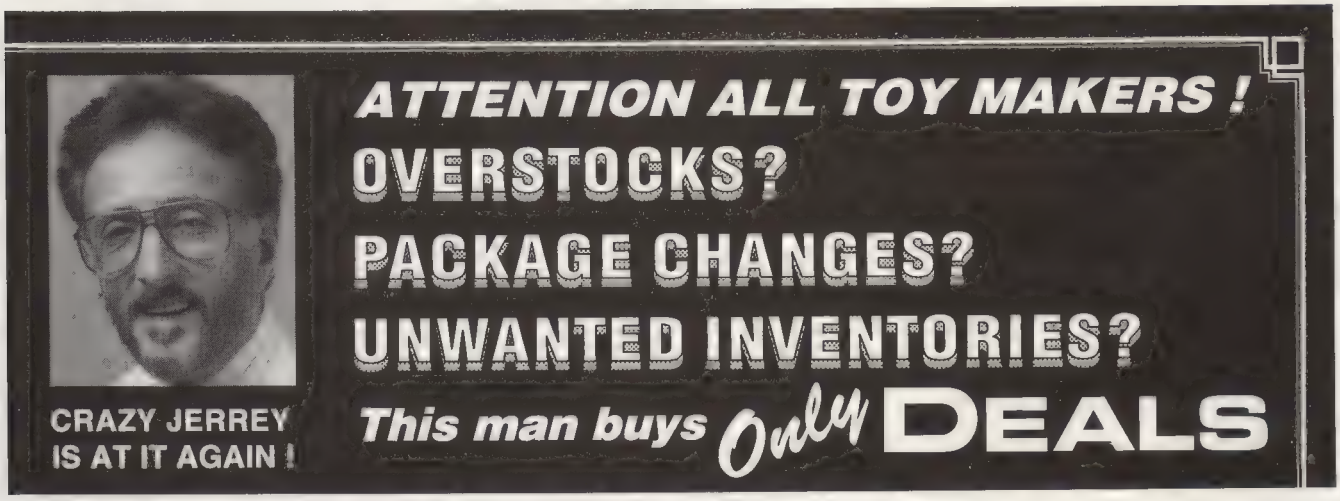
One Swans Crossing product is already hitting the shelves: an action figure and accessory line for girls from Playmates Toys, makers of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, is in distribution and will reach toy retail outlets nationwide by mid-September.

J.A. Roth & Associates, Inc., is a Los Angeles-based marketing service company specializing in sports and entertainment licensing and merchandising. The company's clients include The Harlem Globetrotters, Ice Capades, and Pinkerton Security. Roth also has extensive experience in toy manufacturing sales and marketing.

Dallas Toy Preview set for November

DALLAS — The 1992 Dallas Toy Preview will take place at the Dallas Market Center on November 2-4, 1992. It will offer retailers the opportunity to get a preview of new introductions for the Fall of 1993 before they attend other shows.

The preview is "by appointment only," so retailers must schedule appointments in advance with manufacturers they wish to see.



Last year he became famous for buying closeouts at top dollar prices. This year he's TOTALLY NUTS! Jerrey's got a $50 MILLION "OPEN TO BUY" for Universal-International's new chain of closeout stores : Only DEALS!

Jerrey Lebowitz
Only DEALS!
Division, Universal-International
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Minneapolis, Minnesota 55428

Let Only DEALS! be a fresh NEW DEAL for you! Call Jerrey now for the best deal in the business. Tel.: 800-634-8349 FAX: 612-533-1158

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OCTOBER 31st
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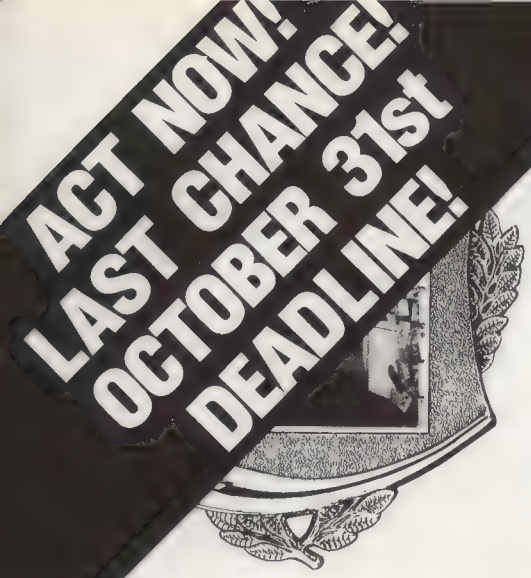

PLAYTHINGS Annual Merchandising Achievement Awards Competition

Established by PLAYTHINGS magazine in 1970, the annual Merchandising Achievement Awards are bestowed on toy retailers in recognition of their innovative ideas and activities in the merchandising and promotion of toys, hobbies, and related products. In addition to receiving a plaque at the annual PLAYTHINGS Award Banquet held during the Toy Fair in New York, winners are afforded national recognition and attention. Past winners range from small independents to major chains.

The Awards will be presented in each of the following categories:

Store Design, Department Design, Store Promotion, Department Promotion

Two awards — First Award and Award of Merit — will be given in each category. At the Editorial Board's discretion additional Honorable Mention Awards may be given.

You are eligible to enter the 1992 competition if you are a toy or hobby shop or department, and have opened or remodeled a unit, or run a promotion, in the United States or Canada, from October 1991 to October 1992. You may enter as many categories as you wish. There are no entry fees whatsoever. Simply use the coupon on this page and follow the rules described here:

1. **Design**
Your entry need not be elaborate but it must consist of photographs or slides and a description of your new or remodeled store or department. There should be a minimum of one exterior as well as two interior photos. Departments may exclude the exterior view. Photos may be either black and white glossies (any size) or color photographs or slides suitable for reproduction. Of course, color is preferred, but is not necessary. The description should recount the changes in design or remodeling. Evidence of increase in store traffic and volume as a result of the design changes may be included. Mention any outstanding features — such as color, texture, traffic flow, or lighting — and describe how the effect was achieved.

2. **Promotion**
Your entry need not be elaborate but it must consist of photographs or slides and a description of your promotion in your store or department. There should be a minimum of two photographs of the promotion and related events (special displays, costumed characters, or signs). Photos may be either black and white glossies (any size) or color photographs or slides suitable for reproduction. Of course, color is preferred, but is not necessary. Samples of advertisements, mailings, and media coverage may also be included. The description should recount the promotion's objectives as well as specific dates, locations, themes, and achievements.

Judgment is based on the merchandising soundness of the entry, rather than on how elaborate it is. Determination of Award winners is made solely by the Editorial Board of PLAYTHINGS. The winning entries are presented in the February issue in a special section devoted to recognizing innovative merchandisers.

Mail completed coupon to:
Editor
PLAYTHINGS
51 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10010
(212-689-4411)

Date

Kindly enter our store or department in the **1992** Competition for PLAYTHINGS Annual Merchandising Achievement Awards in the following category (categories): ☐ Design ☐ Promotion

We will foreward our entry material in accordance with the regulations no later than **October 31, 1992.** All entries become the property of PLAYTHINGS.

Type of retailer (check one): ☐ store ☐ department

Name of store .....

Address .....

Zip code .....

Telephone number .....

Entrant's name .....

Title .....

(Circle No. 17 on Reader Inquiry Card)

Editorial

Retailer uncertainty prevails in annual Christmas forecasts

With no end in sight to the country's economic doldrums and no traffic-pulling megahits on the horizon, toy retailers are entering their critical selling season in a spirit of uncertainty.

Even in a Presidential Election year, which usually inspires optimism, most dealers are playing it close to the vest and keeping their fourth-quarter inventories at a workable level. What's more, there is no guarantee that the hit toys of recent months, Larami's Super Soakers and various troll lines, will carry through the rest of the year.

Judging by our annual Retailer Forecasts and the latest What's Selling reports, another back to basics movement is in store for the Christmas season. A Toy Forecast issued by Duracell U.S.A. supports this conclusion.

Realizing that consumers would be in no mood for risk-taking, many toy manufacturers have come out with more proven items, most priced at $20 or under, which they knew would sell.

It's an industry axiom that consumers may go for inflated-priced items in economically stronger years, but when money is tight, parents are looking for toys that stimulate creativity and offer sustained play appeal and value.

Financially strapped parents are opting for less expensive traditional toys. Among them: Barbie, G.I. Joe, trolls, Creepy Crawlers, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and, yes, Cabbage Patch. Retailers also mentioned such classic lines as Lego, Playmobil, Erector sets, Capsela, Monopoly, and Tinkertoys.

Grandparents, too, show a strong interest in simple, traditional toys with an educational or creative focus.

"Contrary to popular belief, children do not automatically gravitate to the most expensive toys," observes Ruth Roufberg, independent toy consultant to the Duracell Kids' Choice National Toy Survey. The results of last year's Duracell survey revealed that three of the top ten toys tested by more than 600 children in 30 cities retailed for $20 or less.

"If the past four years of the Duracell toy survey are any indication," Roufberg predicts, "action games will continue to be more popular than sedentary games with children." Toys which incorporate lights, sound and action have consistently ranked higher among the nearly 2000 children who have tested approximately 100 toys in the last four years of Duracell's survey.

Educational toys are also gaining more attention from consumers and retailers. Many industry analysts see increasing interest in spelling, drawing, do-it-yourself, creative, and craft-type toys.

A fundamental change also has taken place in the nature of toy selling, according to the TMA. Having the hottest, must-have toy is no longer the most important barometer of a manufacturer's success. Staying power has now become the industry standard.

Price-cuts should spur video games

While classic toys and back-to-basics have been touted as the new trend in the toy industry, the Duracell Toy Forecast predicts that this year will be better than last for video games, thanks to significant price cuts by Sega and Nintendo on their 16-bit systems.

Duracell's sources also are optimistic for toy retailers this holiday season. They expect large toy chains' registers to ring, and discount retailers to fare well by focusing on competitive pricing for popular toys. About 35 percent of toy sales are realized in discount stores, and 33 percent are generated by toy chains, according to the NPD Group's Toy Market Index.

If industry estimates of a 5 to 10 percent increase in toy sales are to be realized, it will take more than wishful thinking. Retailers of all kinds will have to become better merchandisers than ever, both in their purchasing decisions and their in-store promotions and displays. Preparing for Christmas is always a guessing game for even the most seasoned retailers, but the need for effective merchandising is the one sure thing, recession or not.

Frank Reysen Jr.

Editor

Hobby specialists buck the economic trend

Service-conscious consumers, licensed products create optimism

By Bill Pearse

The present economic condition is making life tough for almost everyone. Retailers are finding that they cannot afford to buy haphazardly. The recent failures of major toy chains and countless smaller operations have made merchants notably cautious. And, in these tough times, spending money is something consumers simply cannot do without considerable thought; each dollar must account for itself.

The hobby market is not immune to these recessionary ills. Although hobby categories are traditionally stable during economic duress, sales figures have been predictably underwhelming this year. Outside of Tyco's Fast Traxx and some surprisingly strong licensed products, the hobby categories have been lacking in hot numbers. But retailers who *specialize* in hobbies have been able to capitalize on an economically-inspired trend.

Evidence suggests that hobbyists have become more value-conscious than price-conscious during the recession.

According to statistics supplied by NPD Research on the model kit and R/C categories, consumers seem to be eschewing the price-oriented discount outlets for the service-oriented hobby and toy merchants.

In model kits, the retail breakdown shows that discount shops accounted for about 32 percent of consumer sales in 1991. That number is down significantly from the 50 percent reported for 1990. Likewise, only 30 percent of R/C sales were made through discounters in 1991, down from the 37 percent reported in 1990. Similar statistics were not available for the railroading and die-cast markets, but feedback from retailers suggests that this trend extends to those categories as well.

"Every time we've had a recession our industry has picked up," said Greg Bosak, owner of Chicagoland Hobby. "People don't spend the big dollars on new cars, new clothes, fancy trips, things like that. They stay home. They need something to do and they turn to hobbies."

Accent is on service

Hobby consumers, especially those on a limited budget, want to be convinced that their investment is a sound one. The only way that retailers can ease a customer's reservations about a purchase is through personal service. Knowledgeable salespeople must be

Upper Right: Revell-Monogram's Mustang GT **#243**

◂ Mel Appel's R/C wrestling trucks **#235**

Tyco's Super ▸ Fast Traxx **#242**

able to answer a customer's questions about different hobby products. For instance, a customer may want to know the advantages of investing in H-O scale trains versus G scale. If the salesperson is not knowledgeable about the product, the customer will feel stronger trepidation about the purchase. Retailers that offer this specialized service have been able to increase their market share.

"The hobby market has been pretty strong for us," said Steve Amato of Amato's Toy and Hobby in New Britain, Conn. "Model kits have been the strongest, especially the ones that take a lot of time to do. When the economy's soft, people have more time for their hobbies."

Emphasize value over price

Amato considers hobby activities "low-cost entertainment," since a builder will take 20-30 hours to do a good job on a $10 model kit. But he agrees that service is the key to selling hobby goods.

"Hobbies require a knowledgeable sales staff to really do a good job," said Amato. "You don't have to be an expert, but you've got to know what is needed to satisfy people's requirements, and you have to be able to give advice."

Among model kits, Amato says that his licensed Star Trek kits have sold surprisingly well, "even after all these years."

Retailers can win over customers by proving to them that the shop is dedicated to their hobby.

Cable advertising pays a dividend

Willis Hobbies, of Mineola, N.Y., accomplishes this by buying time on local cable networks. Through this specialized advertising, Willis Hobbies has been able to capitalize on the popularity of NASCAR licensed products.

"We've been on cable for almost five years now," said Steven Ford, buyer at Willis Hobbies. "We've recently added ESPN on Sundays, during the NASCAR races, motorcycle races, truck pulls and anything like that."

He says that customers frequently come into the store saying that they saw one of the TV spots. Even given the relatively high cost of television advertising, Ford is convinced that the

continued on page 32

The High Plains Runner train set from Lionel **#236**

Bachmann's Christmas handcar, new for 1992 **#232**

Car Crusher R/C monster truck from Nikko **#240**

How To Merchandise Your Model Kit Department For Maximum Profits

8 Easy Steps To A More Profitable Model Kit Department

1 Make A Commitment

- The most successful hobby departments dedicate 12-16 feet to the model category. This commitment ensures your customers a variety of models from which to choose.
- Paints and accessories are an important part of any model kit department. Contact Testors for a rack that suits your needs.

2 Offer The Right Product

- Our never-ending market research helps us pick the best mix of kits for your department. We can tailor a selection to your customers' needs.

3 Be Sure You've Got An Effective Replenishment System

- Your model kit department should always be fully stocked. Don't let your best sellers be out of stock. . . ever!

4 Refresh Products Regularly

- Consumer tastes are constantly changing and we're in touch with their demands. Refresh your department at least twice per year with new items. . . and eliminate the slow-movers.

5 Group Product By Categories

- Consumers prefer to shop categories--it's easier to find what they're looking for. Merchandise SnapTite and Luminators together; likewise with glue cars, planes and ships.

6 Balance Shelf Impact With Product Variety

- Billboarding makes sense when your department is at least 16 feet long. Billboarding provides maximum product/package impact for your shelf.
- Shoeboxing is right for departments less than 16 feet. Since variety is key, you need to show a complete line; shoeboxing achieves this by using less space for each kit.

7 Install "Hobby Center" Merchandising Fixtures

- These tools create excitement and organization in your department, while educating consumers to our skill level system of kit selection.

8 Talk to your Revell or Monogram representative today.

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Far Right: Small Western Train set from Playmobil **#237**
Right: Carnival H-O train set from Int'l Hobby **#234**

Hobbies *continued*

advertising venture has been cost-efficient — "definitely, without question."

But Ford insists that all the advertising in the world won't help a hobby shop make sales if it doesn't offer attractive displays and specialized service.

"Display is key, especially with new items," said Ford. "There's nothing like having a built up display; it adds a lot to the selling factor." But even with attractive display, "service is the little added touch you need. All the guys here, we all know what we sell. If somebody has a question about a color scheme on an aircraft or car, we can help them."

Dealers must look for an edge

With consumers being more discriminating with their money, retailers who can create an identity among hobbyists have the best opportunity for success.

"People are being a little more cautious about spending their money, with times being so tough. It isn't just hobbies but toys in general," said Cindy Seward, clerk at Fantasy World Toys in Tacoma, Wash.

But Fantasy World has earned a solid reputation among hobbyists heavy into radio control. They have a track set up outside the store and during the summer they hold races every other weekend.

Races create traffic

"We've always done real well with radio control; we're into it big," said Seward. "We're selling more to the hobbyists with the higher priced items. It helps sales when we have R/C races out here because it lets people see what these cars actually can do and how much fun they really are, rather than just seeing them in a box."

The R/C category showed a dramatic upturn in 1991, with retail sales almost doubling from 1990. Much of that growth may be attributed to the top-selling status of Tyco's Fast Traxx. The popularly-priced R/C cars — which have treads instead of tires allowing for 360-degree turns — have sold well in both traditional toy stores and at hobby outlets. But the category is still awaiting a return to the glory years of the mid-eighties.

Model kits enjoyed banner 1991

Model kits, on the other hand, enjoyed one of its best years ever, with retail sales approaching $180 million.

"Plastic models have had a tremendous year," said Sid Topjian, buyer and merchandise manager for Merchants West. "The Dodge Viper, from manufacturers such as Revell-Monogram and Ertl in various scales, has been one of the most popular introductions this year."

But some of the growth in 1991 model kit sales can be linked directly to Operation Desert Storm. The swell of patriotic pride, along with constant media coverage, sparked a tremendous rise in the sales of military model kits. In fact, last year, Revell-Monogram's CEO Tim Cawley estimated that Desert Storm was responsible for $3-5 million in added revenue at retail. It remains to be seen whether model kits can achieve the same levels during peace time

Model railroading has maintained a steady pace throughout 1992, according to retailers surveyed, but the true test of this hobby category is yet to come. Fourth quarter sales usually tell the story in the toy industry, and in no category is this more true than railroading.

"We do train business all year round," said George Kane, manager of Leisuretime in Feasterville, Pa. "But the real test for trains is, of course, holiday sales."

Lionel aims for fourth quarter

Powell Phillips Jr., manager of Phillips Toy Mart in Nashville, Tenn., commented that market leader Lionel doesn't even come out with its most exciting products until the holiday season begins.

But Lionel is implementing some special holiday promotions intended to keep trains running around Christmas trees all across the country.

A special holiday mall promotion entitled "Lionel: Christmas Memories, Made in the USA" will integrate Lionel train sets into traditional Santa displays and holiday-themed windows in over 350 shopping malls throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Lionel will provide each mall with two complimentary "Nickel Plate Road" train sets, as well as extra track and locomotives.

To further cement its holiday image, Lionel has introduced limited edition specialty products to be included exclusively in Sears' and J.C. Penney's Christmas catalogs.

The Gulf Mobile & Ohio Engine, and the Duluth Missabe Extended Vi-

▲ The 1969 Le Mans die-cast car from Jouef **#231**

sion Caboose are available exclusively through the J.C. Penney catalog; and the Texas & Pacific Mountain Locomotive and Tender, Chicago & Illinois Midland SD-9 Diesel Engine, and Chicago & Illinois Midland boxcars with caboose are available exclusively through the Sears wish book.

But mail-order and discount operations are forcing hobby retailers to be even more service-oriented.

"We've been in the business for 20 years, and model railroading has always been a standard for us," said Chicagoland's Bosak. "But service is very important. You've got a lot of mail order stuff that butchers the prices, so the only way you're going to get a customer to buy from you is you just have got to service them. You can't expect to open the door, stand at the register and wait for them to make a purchase.

"I have a customer that comes into my store and the first thing he does is open a discounter's catalog and ask, 'Can you match these prices?' And I say no I can't, because they're buying directly from the manufacturer. The only thing you're going to get from me is the service."

▲ The Track Cleaning Locomotive from LGB **#239**

Trends don't benefit everyone

In every industry there are the "haves" and the "have-nots." As retailers who have dedicated themselves to the hobby categories have flourished, those who have only kept hobby toys on the shelves as complementary merchandise in their product mix have faltered.

Kiddieland, a four-store chain in the Detroit area, is a mainstream toy retailer not heavily into hobbies. Citing a lack of interest, they have recently dropped their R/C line. "Our hobby

continued

Hobbies 1991

(Retail Sales in Millions)

	Radio Controlled Vehicles (000)'s		Total Models* (000)'s	
	1991	1990	1991	1990
Unit Sales	9,180	5,631	25,928	18,962
Dollar Sales	$347,557	$174,150	$176,953	$142,666
Distribution of Unit Sales by Outlet:				
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Discount	30	37	32	50
Toys R' Us	14	11	8	6
Other Nat'l Toy Chains	7	12	12	8
A/O Toy Stores	5	2	3	5
Department Stores	4	8	3	2
Variety	1	4	3	5
Catalog Showrooms	5	3	0	0
Food/Drug	2	1	3	5
Other	32	22	36	19

*Inclues Plastic Model Cars, Trucks, Aircraft, Boats, Other Plastic Models, Plastic Model Accessories, Non-Plastic Models

Source: NPD Research

Nylint's die-cast Firefighter assortment **#250** ▸

▲ Radio controlled model airplane from Cox Hobbies **#244**

◂ Guillow's PBY-5a Catalina balsa model kit **#249**

Graffic Traffic die-cast from Matchbox **#248**

Hobbies *continued*

sales have been extremely weak," said David Shapiro, president. "As far as I'm concerned, the hobby industry is dead in the water."

Licensing finds niche

Although the hobby industry is traditionally resistant to the fad-like appeal of licensing, two properties — NASCAR and Thomas the Tank Engine — have captured a major slice of the model kit and die-cast pies.

The popularity of NASCAR has begun to soar all across the United States and especially in the more rural areas. The race car drivers and their machines have reached celebrity status. The names Petty, Elliot, Allison, Bodine and others have become household ones, and their cars have become instantly recognizable. Nowhere does this hot license translate better than in the model kit and die-cast areas. NASCAR model kits and die-cast cars have been lead items for manufacturers such as Revell-Monogram, AMT/Ertl and Racing Champions. Life-Like Products' NASCAR electric racing sets have also ridden the wave.

> *"NASCAR products have been the leaders among both model kits and die-cast."*
>
> Powell Phillips Jr.
> Phillips Toy Mart

"Our whole section of NASCAR is good," said Phillips. "NASCAR products have been the leaders among both model kits and die-cast."

continued

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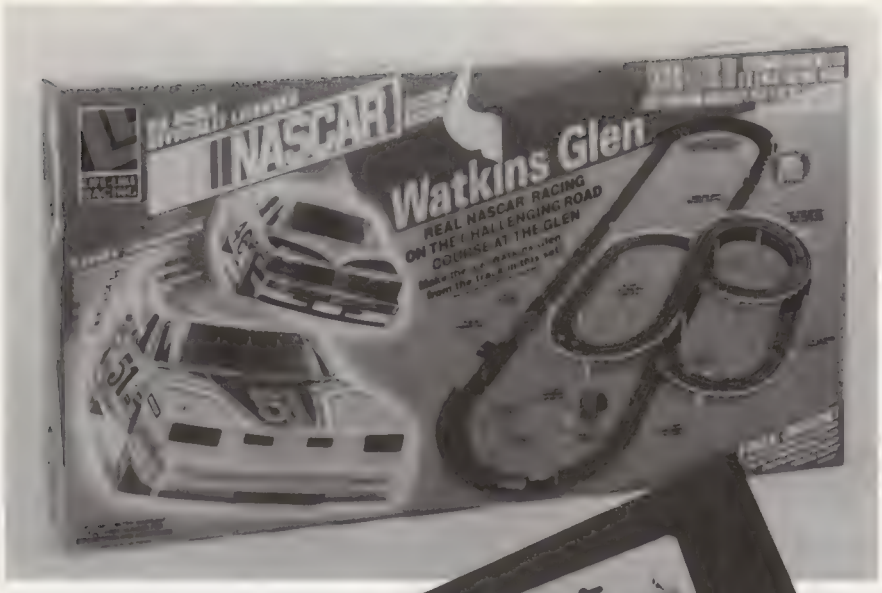
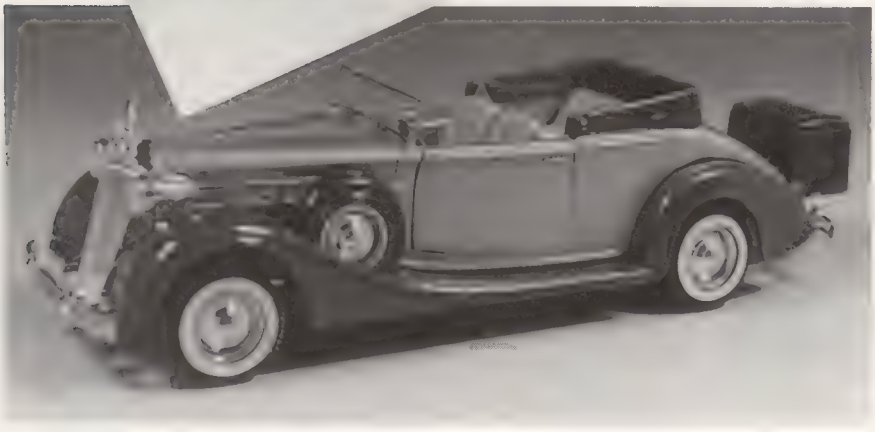


Life-Like's Watkins Glen electric racing set **#247**

Shining Time Station licensed die-cast from The Ertl Company **#246**



1937 Packard Cabriolet die-cast from Solido USA **#245**

Hobbies *continued*

Not to be outdriven by those high-performance stock cars, Thomas the Tank Engine has kept a steady pace in the die-cast category. Thomas, the lead character in the award-winning PBS children's TV series "Shining Time Station," has built quite a following.

Thomas the Tank shines

According to Quality Family Entertainment (QFE), licensors of the Shining Time Station characters, the program is seen in 92 percent of U.S. TV households and is viewed by more than 7.2 million people each week.

The Ertl Company's line of die-cast miniatures based on Thomas the Tank have been popular at both traditional toy shops and hobby specialists. The products have even pulled in outlets that normally don't carry much in the die-cast category.

"Die-cast has never been a strong point for us," said Leisuretime's Kane. "The only thing strong in die-cast has been Thomas the Tank — but we sell *a lot* of Thomas the Tank die-cast."

"Thomas the Tank and NASCAR are probably up at the top as far as sales," said Ford, of Willis Hobbies.

Hobby consumers don't play games

Hobbyists are a special breed of consumer. They take their craft seriously and consider purchases "investments." They tend to shop in environments that will offer more in the way of service than in price, and this quality is accentuated during soft economic cycles.

> *"...when I go shopping, I like to be able to deal with someone who knows what they're talking about."*
>
> Steven Ford
> Willis Hobbies

Retailers who understand this special breed can create an identity among their customers. And that identity can encourage repeat purchases. Some of the best hobby dealers are hobby enthusiasts themselves, and their best customers come to expect a level of expertise from their dealer. This mutual relationship can be more of a sales incentive than any price cut most dealers can afford to implement.

Knowledge goes a long way

Says Ford, of Willis Hobbies, "I know personally when I go shopping, I like to be able to deal with someone who knows what they're talking about."

And retailers who know what they're talking about are cashing in on an appreciative audience of hobby enthusiasts. □

Hobby Showcase

Revell-Monogram expands model kit and die-cast lines

DES PLAINES, ILL. — Revell-Monogram has begun shipping several additions to its model kit and die-cast lines, just in time for the holiday season.

The '59 Cadillac Eldorado, which began shipping in August, is the lead item. This model kit has flying tail fins and bullet lights, symbolizing the lavishness and luxury of the decade of chrome.

The GMC Syclone model kit is Revell-Monogram's tribute to the limited edition GMC pick-up. From the turbo V-6 engine to the innovative instrument panel, the Revell Syclone illustrates the concept of the sports car/pick-up.

The Snap California Pick-Up is another of the newly-released model kits. This SnapTite kit showcases the popularity of customized trucks. The bright color, customized wheels and lowered suspension — typical of this trend — are among the vehicle's selling points.

The two die-cast expansions are the Die-cast Masterpieces and the Diecast Stock Cars collections.

The Diecast Masterpieces — the '69 Corvette Convertible, The Honda/Acura NSX and the BMW 850i Coupe — were introduced this past spring and showcase Revell-Monogram's new packaging and the more upscale design to its die-cast product line.

The '59 Cadillac Eldorado

The Diecast Stock Cars are in 1/24 scale and will feature new paint schemes and additional drivers. The lead two items in this line are the Goodwrench Lumina and Havoline T-Bird.

Revell-Monogram will be introducing new die-cast kits at the Chicago Model and Hobby show with plans to expand the line throughout 1993. **#213**

Tamiya America debuts Super Blackfoot monster kit

ALISO VIEJO, CALIF. — Tamiya America is taking monster trucks to the next generation with its 1/10-scale Super Blackfoot R/C kit.

The Super Blackfoot, an updated version of the original Blackfoot, features a die-cast bevel gear differential for longer wear, plus a new front and rear double wishbone independent suspension system. An all-new center mount servo saver creates equal length tie-rods for consistent and predictable handling in rough turns. Other improvements include longer suspension arms, creating a wider wheel base to increase stability, and new dogbone drive shafts which reduce friction, providing reliable transfer of power to the wheels. Even the monster tires are upgraded with pin spikes for improved traction.

Tamiya's Super Blackfoot R/C kit

The one-shot-molded body shell is made of high-impact styrene and comes alive with dynamic new graphics. Suggested retail price range is $179-198. **#209**

Owi Inc. gets set to walk on the moon

COMPTON, CALIF. — Owi Inc.'s Movit division has developed two new robot kits that help demonstrate scientific principles such as optical sensing, sound sensing and solar sensing.

Moon Walker is a battery-operated robot with a solar sensor that detects shades of light. Four legs driven by a crank motion propel the robot.

Cosmo is a battery-operated kit targeted toward the educational and adult hobby markets. The robot uses a sound sensor for directional control and an infrared beam sensor to detect obstacles. **#205**

Life-Like Products tours the NASCAR circuit

BALTIMORE, MD. — Life-Like Products is capturing the excitement of NASCAR racing with its Watkins Glen electric racing set.

Inspired by the actual Watkins Glen raceway in New York, the set features 31 feet of track, two Fast Trackers cars (painted in genuine NASCAR colors), two trigger-sensitive hand controllers, dual lane lap counter, U.L.-approved power pack, tune-up kit, multi-colored NASCAR flags and signs, full-color poster of the real Watkins Glen, and a photo-filled information booklet.

The Fast Trackers cars are designed to perform like real stock cars, with low chassis and widened rear tires for more magnetic holding power and better handling. These authentic designs allow the Fast Trackers to reach speeds of nearly 1000 scale MPH.

The Life-Like track has the exclusive Dura Lock system that joins each track section from two directions, so the pieces stay connected even under rugged race conditions. Life-Like's Lifetime Limited Warranty covers every component. **#211**

Show Update

Chicago hosts largest RCHTA show

CHICAGO — Over 400 model hobby manufacturers, distributors, importers, model trains manufacturers and publishers will feature their newest items at the 8th Annual Chicago Model Hobby Show, held at the O'Hare Exposition Center.

The event will be open to the trade only on Thursday, October 29th and Friday, October 30th, from 10am to 5pm. On Friday evening, from 6pm to 9pm, the show will be open to the public and will also be open Saturday from 10am to 6pm and Sunday from 10am to 5pm.

Public admission is $6 for adults, $3 for children ages 6-12 years, and free for children ages 5 years and younger.

The show is sponsored by the Radio Control Hobby Trade Association (RCHTA) and co-sponsored by the Model Railroad Industry Association (MRIA).

The show will feature a model railroad module group, a display of radio controlled cars, boats and planes, plus a haunted house manned by the Boy Scouts of America, charity races, Let's Play Giveaway sweepstakes drawing, how-to seminars, free products, hands-on racing events, IROC competitions, world champion team stunt-kite exhibition, and a helicopter demonstration.

More information on the show can be obtained by calling RCHTA at (800) 255-1200.

Mail Order Show reports 40 percent sell out

NO. BRUNSWICK, N.J. — Exhibit space at the National Mail Order Merchandise Show is now 40 percent sold out. The event is targeted for major catalogers and direct marketers.

Exhibitors are manufacturers and importers who are seeking new markets and are taking advantage of the opportunity to have their products represented in catalogs and want their products represented in catalogs viewed by a large number of customers.

Studies show that consumer mail order volume will exceed $100 billion in 1992. The exposition, scheduled between the American Toy Fair and the New York Gift Fair, will take place from February 16-17 at the New York Hilton Hotel in New York City.

A complete sell-out of space is anticipated by mid-December.

The trade-only event will feature an exposition of merchandise designed to appeal to a growing market of upscale consumers who enjoy the convenience of 24-hour a day, worldwide shopping. Emphasis will be on new products to help marketers establish new merchandise directions, and extraordinary items that mail order professionals are in search of.

Exhibitors will fill about 200 booths in such categories as gift items, crafts, toys and games, hobbies, children's products, collectibles, books, electronics, video, home furnishings, pet supplies, sporting goods, apparel and accessories, jewelry and stationery and office supplies.

In addition, the exposition will feature services and products for mail order marketers, such as mailing lists, mail room supplies, delivery and postal services, computer software and equipment, catalog printers, drop shippers and packaging services. Attendees will be major catalog and direct marketers. A comprehensive seminar program addressing several key industry issues will also be offered.

The Marketing Resources Group, a professional show management company with over 25 years of cumulative experience in major expositions and conferences, will manage the event.

Firms interested in exhibiting or attending should contact the Marketing Resources Group, 1254 Highway 27, North Brunswick, N.J., 08902. Tel. (908) 246-3997, Fax (908) 246-3939.

CES attendees give show good grades

WASHINGTON, D.C. — More than 90 percent of consumers surveyed at the 1992 International Summer Consumer Electronics Show said that the show exceeded or met their expectations, according to survey results released by the Electronic Industries Association's Consumer Electronics Group (EIA/CEG).

The 1993 Summer CES was held in Chicago May 28 through May 31, with consumers attending on May 30 and 31.

Two surveys, conducted by EIA's Marketing Services Department for the Consumer Electronics Shows, point to positive consumer acceptance of the Summer CES experience: an initial survey was conducted of 963 consumers, 18 years of age or older, as they entered the Show, and a follow-up survey was conducted of approximately 820 of the same consumers as they exited the Show. The survey results have a margin of error of plus/minus three percentage points.

Survey results suggest that the more than 98,720 consumers who attended the 1992 Summer CES came from the Show eager to repeat the Summer CES experience: over 75 percent of those surveyed said they would attend next year's Consumer Electronics Show.

Additionally, more than 80 percent of those surveyed found the price they paid for admission to the Show a good or excellent value. Forty-two percent of consumers surveyed on Sunday had also attended the Show on Saturday, and, of those visiting the Show on Saturday and Sunday, more than 55 percent had spent at least six hours at the Show on Saturday.

"The survey results back up our view that the consumer days portion of the 1992 Summer CES more than exceeded our expectations," says Gary J. Shapiro, EIA/CEG group vice president. "Our show attracted an audience of knowledgeable consumers with a thirst for consumer electronic products, from computers to compact disc players and everything in between."

New dates announced for American Stationery Fair

ATLANTA — AMC Trade Shows has announced that the American Stationery Fair will run May 2-5, 1993 instead of the originally announced dates, March 27-30, 1993.

The date change comes as a result of exhibitor needs coupled with newly available space at the Atlanta Market Center facility that was previously booked.

"In our original research, retailers told us they would like an earlier Spring date to still be able to buy merchandise for the Christmas season," said Doug Miller, general manager, AMC Trade Shows. "However, they also told us that product selection was the key factor in deciding to attend a show and manufacturers expressed concern about the ability to have their new product introductions ready by the March date. Due to a recent change in our convention calendar, the space became available to schedule the Stationery Fair in a facility and time frame that best serves buyers and exhibitors."

Harrogate No 1

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(Circle No. 20 on Reader Inquiry Card)

Retailers cross fingers for fourth quarter

Christmas hopes hinge on strong TV advertising, election year optimism

By Yvette Towe

With continuing questions about the economy, and with consumers more cautious than ever about spending money, there are questions about how the continuing malaise will affect the crucial Christmas buying season.

Retailers may have liked what they saw at Toy Fair, but do these products still look promising as Christmas rolls around?

Playthings asked a cross-section of toy buyers and toy store owners what they felt would be the top sellers this Christmas season.

Here are their comments:

Brian Rekow
Thinker Toys
Bellevue, Wash.

The Playmobil line is going to do very well for the Christmas season. In particular, the Pirate Island, an addition to the Pirate collection. In the past they have had a dollhouse and now they have come out with an add-on for the dollhouse. Before, they didn't have bathrooms and now that is possible. For people who have already bought the dollhouse this is going to be a good buy.

Playmobil has also redone the circus set from a discontinued one from Europe. There is a figure that you put into a box and when you try to pull it out it's not there. It's a very intriguing piece.

We see a real strong sale in Lego's Technic line geared for ages 8-14. It's a motorized building system.

Something new that a lot of people are waiting for is the Capsela voice-activated remote control unit. Along the same lines is the Meccano Erector set. It has been very, very strong this year. Partly because of name recognition — the nostalgia value attracts the people who grew up in the 1950's and 1960's who recognize the name and buy it for their kids.

There is a local product, just starting to go national, that is being called the Rubik's Cube of the 1990's. It is the Smart Alex Puzzle, invented by Alex Pope who was a political prisoner in Romania for 16 months. This will be at Toy Fair next year.

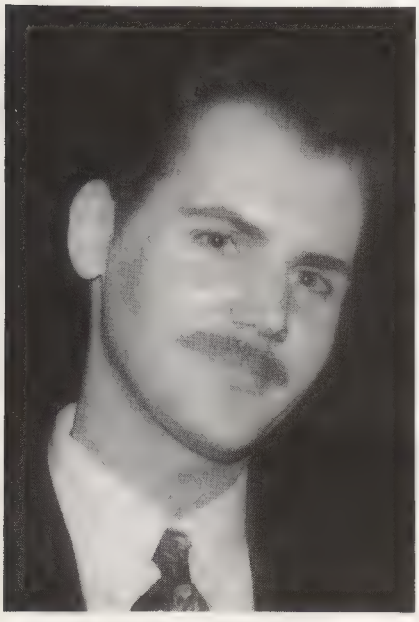
The Thomas the Tank Engine series should do real well at Christmas, and we sold out of our first shipment of a series of books called Braids and Bows in two days. The books teach little girls how to do their hair. We were really surprised.

For the babies, there is The Parent Magazine Toy Line.

Also, the Spray Art Air Brush for kids made by G. Pierce Toys should be strong.

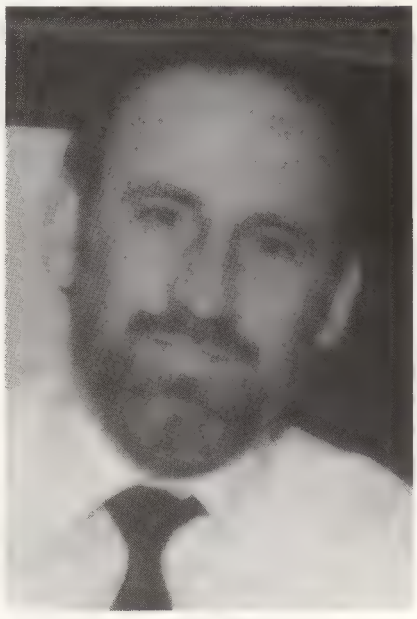
John Diana
Tiny Tots
Greenbrook, N.J.

It all depends on television advertising what the hot toys for Christmas will



Brian Rekow
Thinker Toys

Pat Richards
The Mind Construction Company



Rich Brady
Playco

be. Right now there isn't too much advertising because a lot of people are on vacation.

With the economy of the country, we are not doing a lot of buying right now; it's touch and go. We are trying to finish up with the summer so that we can determine what we are going to be moving for the Christmas season.

Thomas the Tank Engine should be a good seller for the Christmas season. The show is now coming back on the air, and should see a resurgence of sales.

Trolls are going to be hot. Rollerblade Barbie should do well also, and other lines of Barbie are going to be released. Beauty and the Beast will be released on video this October.

I don't see anything in the games category. Everybody is just waiting to see what is going to happen.

Pat Richards
The Mind Construction Company
St. Louis, Mo.

We are into nature, out of door activities. We sell puzzles, rocks, books, fossils, etc. We want to encourage kids to develop new hobbies and new interests.

We work a lot with science toys. The trend for Christmas hopefully will be similar.

Our business is not the type of business which deals with get-in, get-out toys. Hopefully the child and the family will develop a real interest in the toy and will come back and want something more in that area; something that they can continue to work and grow with and enjoy.

We are hoping that what is selling now will continue to sell through to Christmas. Already some of our customers are saying that they cannot wait until Christmas.

Rich Brady
Playco
San Marco, Calif.

I predict that for boys, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are really going to be hot this Christmas.

For girls I would say Totally Hair Barbie. Barbie, in general, is going to sell well. I think it's going to be a very good basic toy for Christmas.

Video games are also going to do very well this Christmas.

Joy Murray
Gregory's
Mt. Holly, N.J.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles will probably not be as hot this year as they were last year. Batman may be strong if it keeps up the trend.

Barbie will also sell well.

Ann Frago
Old World Toys
Sacramento, Calif.

Right now we are doing really well selling Playmobil and Koosh paddles. We specialize in European toys, even though we do carry an array of domestic toys, including battery-operated toys, but we do not carry any licensed products.

For the Christmas season, the Erector sets, Playmobil and Brio will do really well. They have been consistent sellers for us.

Al Angel
Toy & Hobby Co.
Salidaj, Calif.

The Tyco Fast Traxx should do very well for Christmas. Boys toys are going to be very sound this year.

The basics and staples of toys, Barbie and trucks for example, should sell very well for the upcoming holiday season.

Another good item, the skating dolls by Mattel and Tyco should also do very well for Christmas.

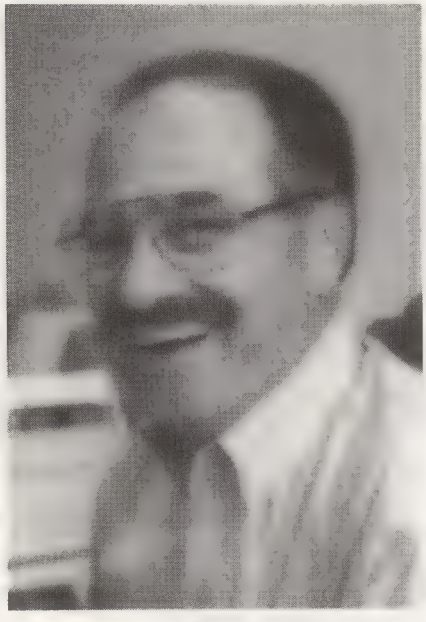
Alan Greenberg
Toy World
Newtown Square, Pa.

For Christmas, trolls will be big. Lego items will be strong. We're going to devote some endcaps to Thomas the Tank Engine items.

A game that I think will be big is the Madeline game, from Ravensburger. It's a non-TV game.

I think it will be a good Christmas. There's a presidential election, and that usually puts things in a different light. □

Ann Frago
Old World Toys



Al Angel
Toy & Hobby Co.

Alan Greenberg
Toy World

Sesame Street comes to town

Expanding chain capitalizes on continued popularity of license

By Marian Bond

With the opening of the Northridge, California Sesame Street General Store in Northridge Fashion Center, the Hayward, California-based company boasted 15 operations in mall locations in California, Oregon, Nevada, and Arizona, and they expect to see that total increased to 18 by the end of the year, according to Gene Platin, president and chief executive officer of the company. The first Sesame Street stores, which all average 3200 square feet, were opened in 1990—two in Southern California, and two in Northern California (South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa, was first, and within 45 days, Glendale Galleria, Glendale; Stanford Shopping Center, Palo Alto; and Stonestown Galleria, San Francisco).

"We expect that in 1993 we will be building an additional 20 stores, and will be opening some of those in the Midwest and East Coast, as well as three stores in London," said Platin when PLAYTHINGS visited with him at the opening of the Northridge store in August.

He explained how he became involved with Sesame Street through Children's Television Workshop (CTW). "In 1988 CTW Workshop was very proud of the products (Sesame Street toys) they were putting on the market, and they analyzed how the mass market retail stores were displaying and selling these toys. They found that buyers were cherry picking, and not making the presentation they wanted to see with Sesame Street products." Platin, who has an extensive retail background, was contracted to head up a privately held company with the license to use the Sesame Street name with the concept of targeting children between the ages of infant to 6 with a mix of Sesame Street toys and books as well as clothing, and quality toy products available from other manufacturers, all in Sesame Street environments.

The carefully selected merchandise going into each store is comprised of

Left: Gene Platin enjoys watching children at the educational toy display.
Above: This Sesame Street plush display is designed to appeal to everyone.

70 percent Sesame Street goods with 30 percent being toy and book products, and 40 percent apparel. The balance of 30 percent will be complementary toy products that do not bear the Sesame Street name. "In apparel, we share the exclusive rights with J.C. Penney, yet design and manufacture our own lines," said Platin. "Everyone has the rights to sell the Sesame Street toy products today but we have the exclusive right to use the characters and ambiance, and we work closely with the Henson organization and CTW to make sure we are correct. Our buyers select which Sesame Street items will be carried in the stores. We look for what will be good for us as merchants and as business people. However, we are category dominant in Sesame Street products."

Computers keep control

The merchandising concept utilized by the company calls for a carefully controlled inventory and marketing strategy.

"Before we opened the first store we invested $750,000 in a state-of-the-art computer system. We know what is happening any minute of the day in our stores. We have automatic replenishment of inventory. Every product has a minimum and maximum level, and everything is the same in each store."

For delivery from their 35,000 square foot Hayward warehouse they use common carriers, palletize and shrink wrap everything. "Our freight costs to the stores are controllable and below planned costs."

Platin said that they do not want managers at store level to become involved in merchandising. "Our managers are to focus on customer service. That is their major responsibility. Every product is plan-o-grammed. We know at headquarters if something is selling or not selling. We have an analysis on return on investment per fixture. If it's not paying for itself, we make a change. Every fixture, every square foot of the store, has to pay for itself. We pay rent on every square foot in the store."

He said that the only exception to the rule — that each store is basically identical — would be in apparel, where seasonal conditions need to be considered.

As with any new venture, there are lessons to be learned, and the recently opened Northridge store represents a new concept for the Sesame Street General Stores.

Basically what they've done, according to Heather Crosby, director of marketing, is to incorporate brighter and more even lighting, and to change the gondolas to be more merchandise compatible with deeper shelves. But a more important change was necessary.

The stores originally utilized vignettes, and the Sesame Street ambiance became somewhat overpowering. The result was the children enjoyed the stores so much that the mothers had problems keeping track of them.

Platin also pointed out that, while they have the cash register near the front in the first stores, they found that it was distracting for the mother to be making a purchase and still keep track of the youngsters.

With the Northridge store, their new concept store, they have done away with the vignettes and are finding that, with the brighter lighting and the check out counter mid-store, there is a more open and less complicated environment for both parent and child.

> *"Sesame Street has the reputation for quality and integrity, and that's what we intend to continue in our stores."*
>
> Gene Platin, president and CEO
> Sesame Street Retail Stores Corp.

And while they do not plan to go back and revamp all the existing stores, the original South Coast Plaza store in Costa Mesa is in line for new fixtures and a re-do.

"We're very pleased with South Coast Plaza as it's doing almost $500 per square foot. It's a successful store, but one reason we are successful in our business is that we never think of ourselves as successful, but always are trying to improve. We never want to be stagnant." Platin added that they will target two other of the original stores for transition to the new concept.

Platin also discussed how they select malls and store locations within malls. "We look for a large nucleus of homes and families with children in the zero to six age group. And then within the mall, location is paramount. We look for traffic flow. We like to be in the center court, or near the food court, or near the elevators. We are turning out to be a destination store. The parents shop for clothing, but they promise the child they will visit Sesame Street before they leave. There is no toy store in the malls today that is focused for our customer. We have a market niche that can't be copied or emulated."

Products must meet high standards

He pointed out the enormous popularity of the Sesame Street TV show and its continued growth in viewership. "Sesame Street has been developed on integrity, and that's why everything we do has to be approved by the Children's Television Workshop. Sesame Street has the reputation for quality and integrity, and that's what we intend to continue in our stores."

He said the average price of an SKU in their stores is $9.07, but prices range from 69 cents to a $300 Brio set. "We have something for everyone."

Books play an important part in the merchandising plans in these stores, and they have made buying a pleasant experience for parent and child. Books are displayed on three walls and on racks, and a bench is incorporated at the base of the three walls so that little ones and their adult friends can sit and make a buying decision. They also have bean bag chairs available.

"Books and videos are a major part of our total business, and it is a repeat business. It is our highest percentage category," said Platin. Fifty percent of the books on their shelves bear the Sesame Street name. Those, and the balance of the book inventory, are carefully selected by a management team comprised of a head buyer and two assistants who do nothing but make these important selections. They frequently have special events and bring in authors to sign books.

Regarding the 30 percent of product in inventory that does not bear the Sesame Street name, Platin said they look for merchandise that is equal to Sesame Street, but items that Sesame Street does not license. "We look for complementary product that supplements the Sesame Street assortment and in categories where there are no licensed goods. Items such as Playmobil, Brio and Lego. These are the items that are compatible with Sesame Street."

In making buying decisions, Crosby pointed out that they want not only educational toys, but edu-fun toys. And they want the child to feel at home in the stores. Fixtures are at the right height for the six and under crowd.

continued on page 52

Licensing Scope

Timeless Tales debut in child care centers

KANSAS CITY, MO. — A summer-long curriculum brought top-of-mind awareness to Timeless Tales from Hallmark licensed juvenile products.

La Petite Academy, which operates 800 child care centers nationwide, this summer featured Timeless Tales animated home videos as part of its curriculum. During the 13-week summer session, thousands of preschoolers enjoyed classic stories from the Timeless Tales from Hallmark animated video series. Even more impressions were made through hands-on classroom activities and with regular written communication from La Petite Academy Centers to parents.

Seven titles from the Timeless Tales collection were chosen as part of the summer curriculum by La Petite, the country's second largest child care center. Featured this summer — and slated again for 1993 and 1994 — were: "The Ugly Duckling", "The Elves and the Shoemaker," "Puss in Boots," "Thumbelina," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "The Emperor's New Clothes," and "Rumpelstiltzkin."

"We're excited about the grass roots exposure the La Petite curriculum brings to the Timeless Tales products," said Brenda Cherpitel, marketing executive for Hallmark Licensing. "This increased visibility to children and their parents has the potential to influence sales of Timeless Tales products in the fourth quarter."

The Timeless Tales from Hallmark home video series has been endorsed or recommended for viewing by three key national educational organizations. The animated video series is complemented by an array of children's products representing all major product categories, including plush toys, bedding, and sleepwear. The Timeless Tales animated home video series is a joint project of Hallmark Licensing and Turner Home Entertainment under the Hanna-Barbera brand.

A surprise visit from The Emperor, star of "The Emperor's New Clothes," was part of the day's activities at a La Petite Academy preschool and child care center.

Dakin acquires Ren & Stimpy license

BURLINGAME, CALIF. — Ren & Stimpy, those popular cartoon characters match up with Dakin this Fall when their likenesses are reproduced in three-dimensional plush. These wacky plush characters, featuring poseable hands and legs to capture the effect of their contorted bodies, will retail for approximately $20 and $24 respectively. The deranged duo will also appear in Dakin's graduation program this Fall and will be featured in additional product categories in January.

Dakin has also entered into licensing agreements with Scholastic and Lucasfilm. Developed by Nickelodeon, the kids cable network, "The Ren & Stimpy Show" airs on Sunday mornings and ranks in the top 20 cartoons weekly. This odd couple comedy duo features Ren, a Chihuahua, and his feline sidekick, Stimpy. The cartoon features bright colors and and bizarre humor as the two cult characters embark on life's big adventure. MTV has added the cartoon to its Saturday night lineup.

Dakin has entered into a licensing agreement with Scholastic, Inc. to develop a collection of stationery and gift items based upon Scholastic's best selling book series, The Baby Sitters Club. In keeping with the target audience for the books, the Dakin collection will be designed for girls ages 6 to 12. The line will include many items that are useful in real-life baby sitting activities and role playing.

Dakin's line will be comprised of items ranging from date books to pencils, created to meet the personal needs of the quintessential Baby-Sitters Club fan. Components will be designed so that each piece can stand alone or be coupled with others to create coordinated groupings. **#253**

Rose Art, Turner sign Tom and Jerry pact

ATLANTA — Turner Home Entertainment has announced that Rose Art Industries is among the licensees for "Tom and Jerry — The Movie."

Rose Art Industries will create bold and colorful children's cardboard jigsaw and inlaid puzzles featuring a variety of designs using the film's characters, as well as a puzzle depicting the movie's one-sheet poster.

Other licensees include: Jaymar Specialty (customized cardboard dominos and character funmobiles); Just Toys (P.V.C. bendable figures); T.C.A. Group (preschool items); and Poof Toy Products (foam sporting goods, basketball hoop set and puzzles).

The animated, feature-length musical action/adventure will be released internationally in select territories this fall and worldwide in 1993. It will make cartoon history by giving the classic cat and mouse their first speaking roles since their creation in 1940. **#252**

QFE, Time Warner sign 'Shining Time' deal

NEW YORK — Quality Family Entertainment, a Britt Allcroft Company, and A*Vision, subsidiary of Time Warner, Inc., signed an exclusive marketing agreement for the distribution of home videos based on Shining Time Station, the award-winning PBS children's series. The joint announcement came from Kenn Viselman, head of sales and marketing for QFE, and Stuart Hersch, A*Vision president.

This marks the first initiative for Shining Time Station's new licensing program and signals A*Vision's entry into the children's home video market.

The agreement calls for the production and distribution of a series of 26 videos devoted to Shining Time Station, including: Holiday Specials with Mr. Conductor as played by George Carlin and Ringo Starr; music memory videos from the series; The Juke Box Puppet Band; Schemer's "How-to" videos for children; and the adventures of Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends. It is expected that the videos will be released over the next three years. "It has always been QFE's plan," commented Viselman, "to launch a licensing program for Shining Time Station product starting with video material from the series itself. And when A*Vision approached us, we knew that a match had been made. We are proud to have formed such an important partnership, and anticipate that this will be an exciting launch for Shining Time Station's licensing program."

"Both Quality Family Entertainment and Shining Time Station represent quality and integrity in children's programming," said Stuart Hersch, president of A*Vision. "We are proud and excited to be entering into the children's home video market with QFE as our partner."

We're History

1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992 . . .

For licensing information contact: Diane M. Baldovsky, Original Appalachian Artworks
P.O. Box 714, Cleveland, GA 30528 **404-865-2171 FAX: 404-865-5862**

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Manufacturer Showcase

In-store merchandising a key for Revell-Monogram

DES PLAINES, ILL. — In-store merchandising is an important part of the Revell-Monogram philosophy of merchandising model kits.

The company has tied in its skill-level labeling with an extensive in-store signage program.

Revell-Monogram has also released a pamphlet that helps retailers get the most out of their model kit department. Titled "7 Easy Steps to a More Profitable Model Kit Department," the pamphlet offers hints such as "group product by categories" and "be sure you've got an effective replenishment system."

The pamphlet also describes how to set up ideal planogram, 20 foot planogram, and ideal planogram-fixtured.

For instance, the ideal planogram fixtured features signage to increase sales. The Revell-Monogram Hobby Center merchandising kit includes colorful header panels and category channel strips. The signage highlights the model kit section and is designed to generate excitement with vivid photos of actual models. Shelf strips help the consumer find the right product.

"As we put signage together, and as we're trying to look at what makes sense in merchandising a section, we had tied in both the idea of setting the model kits off as a hobby center with a large portion tying in with skill level labeling," said G. Carl Pickard, senior vice president of sales and marketing at Revell-Monogram. "The consumer can say 'here's what skill level one, two, and three means.' In the test stores, it was successful, it was working."

The in-store merchandising program is in effect at full-line merchandisers, and some drug stores around the country. The program will be in a quarter to a third of all Toys R Us stores, and a test program with Wal-Mart is continuing.

"We've had a lot of input from the trade and the consumers," continued Pickard. "It's not something we did on our own. We've refined it."

Pickard says in-store signage may be expanded to other hobby categories, and perhaps to the company's science line, depending on the success of the model kits program.

"More retailers say signage is the way of the nineties," says Pickard. "We're using signage to turn product faster. That's what this is all about. It really is a retail/merchandising partnership with our trade accounts."

2 MCH Fun captivates puzzle fans with Smart Alex

BELLEVUE, WASH. — Smart Alex is a new brain-teasing puzzle from 2 MCH Fun. The puzzle has four colors, six sides and rotates until all the colors line up.

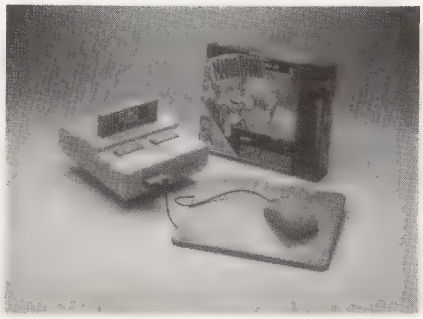
Smart Alex was created by Romanian inventor Alex Pop. He conceived of the idea while spending 16 months in a Romanian jail as a political prisoner for speaking out for a free trade union. The puzzle kept its inventor from going crazy in prison and can become an addiction for serious puzzle fans too. Smart Alex has a suggested retail price of $14. **#201**

Nintendo breaks ground with video game mouse

REDMOND, WASH. — Nintendo of America has introduced Mario Paint and Mouse, an innovative program that allows users to create art, animation and musical composition, using a mouse controller.

Available exclusively for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES), Mario Paint and Mouse is the premiere video game to incorporate the mouse, and the company expects the advent of the video game mouse to have far reaching effects.

"Other people have tried to run paint systems on a 16-bit platform, but using a traditional controller is frustrating," said Peter Main, Nintendo's vice president of marketing. "Using a mouse lets you put any of 15 colors on an individual pixel. It compares favorably with the paint systems available on personal computers at a fraction of the cost of the mouse and software for these platforms."



Nintendo's Mario Paint & Mouse

The art function includes three pen sizes, three shape templates, an air brush, a fill paintbrush, 120 ready-made stamps, 75 textured backgrounds, nine different screen erasers, and two sizes of letters, numbers and punctuation.

Players can also choose four, six or nine frame animation. They can choose to animate one of the ready-made stamps, or build a stamp or drawing of their own and make it move within the screen. And the path the animation can follow is infinitely variable.

Finally, the artist can compose a musical score. By choosing any of 15 picture icons and placing them on the scale, composers can create single notes or harmonies.

The 256 Ram system memory means the artist can save an entire "collage," consisting of a background drawing, animation and musical score. The masterpiece can then be permanently stored on a VCR.

Nintendo also announced that several third party licensees are at work designing new games that will make use of the mouse controller.

Mario Paint and Mouse is available at a suggested retail price of $59.95. **#204**

Tyco Toys improves on popular Fast Traxx R/C

MOORESTOWN, N.J. — Super Fast Traxx is the follow-up to Tyco's popular Fast Traxx R/C vehicle. The vehicles are 25 percent bigger and faster, and still zoom over all types of terrain, pop wheelies, do 360-degree turns and more. They're powered by two 380 motors and a Super Turbo 7.2V rechargeable battery pack. **#212**

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People

MCA/Universal names new licensing manager

MCA/Universal has appointed Jean Wyman as manager of domestic licensing.

Wyman will be responsible for managing and soliciting licensing programs in the apparel, accessories and domestic categories for the entire list of MCA properties, including Jurassic Park, Northern Exposure, Rocky and Bullwinkle and the Official Universal Studios Monsters. In addition, she will also coordinate and maintain retail programs with national retailers.

Wyman was most recently a consultant to software manufacturer Activision.

Tyco Toys has promoted Jay Kahan to executive vice president. Kahan joined Tyco in 1974 and most recently was senior vice president of sales. In his new position, he will oversee U.S sales of all Tyco and Tyco Preschool products.

Steven Manufacturing Co. has appointed Sam Scott, C.P.A., executive vice president-chief financial officer. Scott was most recently with Barclay, Yarborough and Scott.

Electronic Arts has appointed Jack Heistand as the company's new senior vice president of marketing.

Heistand was most recently at Hearst magazines, as vice president and publisher since 1986.

Electronic Industries Association/Consumer Electronics Group has promoted Suzanne Heaton to staff vice president of government and legal affairs of the EIA/CEG.

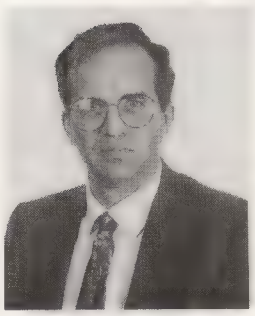
Heaton will serve as primary advisor on legislative issues involving the Consumer Electronics Group. She will also direct the staff in monitoring and shaping CEG's state and federal legislation, regulatory and judicial proceedings.

Heaton was most recently the director of Government Affairs.

Lego Systems Inc. has promoted Heidi Bailey to assistant manager of direct marketing.

In her new position, Bailey will be responsible for the planning, development, execution and post-evaluation of marketing programs for Lego Shop At Home. She will continue to manage the Lego Builders Club program, including supervision of all outside vendors that support the club.

Bailey most recently held the position of direct marketing assistant.



Sam Scott
Steven Manufacturing

John Dickey
Western Publishing

Kenneth R. Young
Zak Designs

Mattel has promoted Jean McKenzie to vice president-marketing for its plush and small doll product lines and Patricia Wyatt to vice president-marketing for its large doll product line.

McKenzie was most recently senior director-marketing and has been with the company for three years.

Wyatt most recently was senior director-marketing and has been with the company for seven years.

In related news, Mattel has also appointed Louis Gioia Jr. senior vice president-marketing, responsible for boys toy product lines.

Gioia most recently served as vice president of marketing and product development with Tonka Corp.'s Tonka Toy Division.

Just Toys has appointed Norm Stein vice president of sales.

Stein will be responsible for all U.S. sales for the toy company.

Stein most recently was in charge of his own manufacturers representative business.

Western Publishing has promoted John Dickey to vice president of special markets division and Mark Miskin to the consumer products sales division.

Dickey is a thirty year veteran at Western Publishing and he is in charge of special market sales, custom publishing, retail projects and valuable brands.

Previously, Miskin was the district manager in the New England consumer products sales area.

Hy Forman announced that Sheldon Goldberg has joined the company as partner and vice-president and will open a branch office in Encino, California.

In his new position, his responsibilities will be to oversee the licensing of a new glow-in-the dark process which lasts for hours, and a process for longer lasting durable scents.

Goldberg most recently was a partner/buyer of Karls Toy Stores, a 25-store chain based in Southern California.

Gametek has promoted Jody Eichler to national sales manager, Sega division.

Eichler previously was sales coordinator, Nintendo division.

Bliss House has named Robert Wanke vice president.

Wanke will be responsible for the company's product development division, will manage the overall sales and marketing and will be the main liaison between clients and the toy industry.

Wanke most recently was at SLM International, where he led both the marketing and R&D departments in developing and marketing product lines.

Zak Designs recently hired Kenneth R. Young as vice president of operations. In his new position, Young will be responsible for warehousing, assembly, production, transportation, and product development.

A veteran of the toy industry for 24 years, he previously worked as general manager for Henry Gordy for 16 years and Larami Corp. for six years.

POPAI has named Richard K. Blatt executive director. His responsibilities are to actively promote and market point-of-purchase producers and suppliers, consumer products and services, retailers and educators.

Blatt was previously vice president, marketing and operations for the American Advertising Federation.

Sunbow has promoted David Wollos to senior vice president of international sales and operations.

Wollos will be responsible for programming in all major international markets including Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. □

Taking the pain out of liquidation

Careful planning, savvy consultants can make liquidation less of an ordeal

By Gary A. Wright

For many toy retailers, this Christmas season will be critical to survival.

After two Christmas seasons that were less than buoyant for many independent toy retailers, Christmas 1992 may make the major difference between the operation of a viable business and a decision to pack it all in.

What may be particularly difficult for many toy retailers this year is the increasing market penetration of superspecialist Toys R Us, which now claims the largest share of toy business at retail. At the same time, the nation's largest general merchandise discount retailer, Wal-Mart, has entered new markets in its ever-widening push into areas where it was not represented last Christmas.

With the highly aggressive everyday-low-pricing policies that both Toys R Us and Wal-Mart are known and respected for, it can only be expected that their impact on toy retailing will again increase this Christmas.

But toy retailers should not wait to take action. What should be the best season of the year for toy retailing is the time to initiate aggressive promotional programs designed to boost business, or to make the decision to liquidate.

Dun & Bradstreet Corp., which keeps track of business failures, reports that toy, hobby and game shops in 1991 had a tough time, if that is news, with failures increasing over 25 percent, compared with the previous year.

Gary A. Wright is the president of Denver, Colorado-based G.A. Wright, Inc., which he founded in 1981. The company provides management consultant services in the areas of sales promotion and retail liquidations.

This year, the well-publicized difficulties of such chains as Child World and Lionel Kiddie City do not bode for much improvement.

In fact, the time is now for independents and smaller chains to put a strategy into place that will meet the targets for a successful Christmas in a tough year. Hoping that the momentum of Christmas shopping will bring the desired sales and profits is no longer enough, if it ever was.

What can be done to build business in the face of daunting competition?

Promotions can boost sales

The programs my company recommends are built around a combination of targeted direct mail advertising pieces, frequent shopper programs, weekly special events, contests, and some local media advertising, all designed to create heavy traffic and immediate as well as repeat sales.

We also recommend re-merchandising a toy store to create visual excitement. And we provide solid information about how a store can create its own promotional programs, based on creating excitement rather than simply cutting prices, after our involvement has ended.

For such diverse toy store clients as Togs & Toys in Ketchikan, Alaska, Green Dragon in North Charleston, South Carolina, The Toy Shoppe in Norwalk, Conn., and others, we have created Treasure Hunt Days, Pretty Baby Contests, You've Come a Long Way Days, Early Bird Specials, and events that cater to kids, with clowns and balloons and prizes.

But for those store owners who do not want to accept the challenge of operating in an ever-more competitive environment, we are also prepared to serve as a consulting company that will plan and manage the execution of a liquidation sale, on a fee basis. That is quite different from the way other liquidation companies work.

If indeed the decision is to liquidate, the best time to put such a program into place is pre-Christmas, not after Christmas. Normally, a liquidation should end on December 24, and not carry over into January.

This advice at first may sound odd to a toy retailer who believes he would prefer to struggle through Christmas, generating cash from increased business, before biting the bullet.

But the point is that the margins a toy retailer realizes from a liquidation depend on the competitive nature of the marketplace. If you are trying to liquidate at a time everyone is cutting prices, it is likely that you will have to advertise deeper discounts, and therefore accept lower margins, and will generate less cash. During the pre-Christmas season, however, price cutting is likely to be less severe than at any other time of the year. The result will be a higher gross return.

Furthermore, it will take more time to complete a successful liquidation in a slow retail period, and therefore the expenses of doing business — rent, payroll, overhead, advertising — will continue for a longer time. Before Christmas, a liquidation almost invariably proceeds more rapidly

continued on page 51

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3. ☐ Gift Shop
4. ☐ Discount
5. ☐ Department
6. ☐ Other Retailer
7. ☐ Wholesale/Distributor
8. ☐ Manufacturer's Representative
9. ☐ Manufacturer
10. ☐ Importer
11. ☐ Designer/Inventor
12. ☐ Licensor
13. ☐ Other_____

B. Type of outlet
14. ☐ Independent store
15. ☐ Chain

C. Number of retail outlets
16. ☐ 1
17. ☐ 2 to 4
18. ☐ 5 to 10
19. ☐ 11 to 25
20. ☐ over 25

D. Annual $ volume per outlet
21. ☐ Up to $500,000
22. ☐ $500,000 to $1M
23. ☐ $1M to $3M
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- ☐ (s) Discount
- ☐ (d) Department
- ☐ (c) Other Retailer
- ☐ (w) Wholesale/Distributor
- ☐ (r) Manufacturer's Representative
- ☐ (m) Manufacturer
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- ☐ (k) Designer/Inventor
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Improving Your Business

continued from page 48.

Although it may be tempting to think it is possible to liquidate a retail toy business successfully without engaging the services of a company that specializes in retail liquidations, there are many hazards and pitfalls.

Most retailers, for example, have no experience in liquidating a store and are not geared to thinking about the different merchandising and promotional tactics that are needed to produce the optimum results, in an efficient, rapid and cost-effective fashion.

It is easy to sell the first 75 percent of the inventory. The problem is always the last 25 percent. It is especially important to generate sufficient volume and profits at the beginning, or front-end, of the sale to compensate for the markdowns that are necessary to obtain a complete liquidation.

Maintaining momentum is also critical. If traffic is allowed to flag, momentum is lost, and the sale stalls. The result is unsold stock, and the need to spend a lot of advertising money to regain traffic and sales.

We know, from experience, that we can liquidate an entire store or company in a six-to eight-week period. Typically, using our formula and program, the return in gross sales as a percentage of beginning inventory at cost is around 110 percent for a complete store liquidation.

It is not unusual for us to receive letters from satisified clients. One example is from the 24-store Tons O Toys president R.L. Pruitt, who wrote: "Opening day of the sale was unbelievable. Our parking lots were full; long lines formed with hundreds of customers waiting to get in."

And, from a single store company, Chad's Rainbow in Englewood, Colorado, whose president wrote, "We sold everything in the store. We did it without giving it away. And we paid off our nervous secured creditors!" □

Tyco to close plant and lay off 300 workers

MOORESTOWN, N.J. — Tyco Toys has announced it would close one plant and lay off 300 employees in a consolidation of its domestic packaging and distribution operations. The toy maker will close its Moorestown plant in southwestern New Jersey by the end of the year and move operations to the company's site near Portland, Ore., where all of the company's United States packing and distribution will be performed.

Approximately 600 people work at the Oregon site, with the number to grow to 700 after the consolidation is complete. About 50 workers employees will be transferred to the corporate headquarters and other Tyco locations.

Displaced workers will receive severance pay and job search assistance.

Manufacturers' Representatives

A directory of toy and hobby sales organizations from coast to coast

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Sesame Street *cont. from page 43*

There are plenty of demonstrator toys, including a section for the more advanced learning items—which proved to be enormously popular during the opening days of the Northridge store.

The acceptance by the shoppers of the Sesame Street stores is reflected in their finding that, rather than the bulk of their business taking place during the Christmas season, sales tend to be more evenly spread throughout the year. "While most toy stores do 32 percent to 34 percent of their business during November and December, we're seeing closer to 25 percent at that time. So ours is more a year-round operation."

There is also a year-round dedication to service, the key word at these stores. Free gift wrapping is always offered. Employees are given a ten-day training period before going on the floor in order to assure they know how the store operates, and how to be of assistance to the shopper. Customers are given an opportunity, through a questionnaire available at the checkout counter, to rate the store on service and merchandise. These evaluations are reviewed with care by a number of the management team at headquarters. Crosby said people do fill these out, and it has been a help in analyzing what and how they're doing.

Platin said that the most rewarding experience for him is when a parent comes up to him and says "I love your store." That's how you measure it. We have such a great customer acceptance. At the Northridge opening, the marketing director of the mall came in and said she'd never seen a store generate as much initial interest. When you get those kinds of comments — and when you get an award from PLAYTHINGS, (Feb. 1992 Licensing Scope Special Achievement Award) — you think you're doing something right." □

Toy Tips lends a hand to toy consumers

MILWAUKEE, WIS. — Toy Tips, a toy consulting firm, has found a new way to educate parents and grandparents about the most safe and popular toys for kids.

The Toy Tips Safety and Selection Manual is the company's newest consumer aid. This 24-page quarterly newsletter is packed with information obtained through focus group research at the company's testing facility. At the facility Toy Tips tests new toys from over 100 domestic and international toy manufacturers such as Hasbro, Mattel, Nintendo, Fisher-Price, and Lego. Subscriptions to the newsletter are $20 per year.

Toy Tips continues to offer the Toy Information Hotline (1-900-420-3717 EXT-308), which provides up-to-the-minute information on the toy industry. Cost is $2 per minute.

Fleer Corp. debuts 1992 NBA basketball cards

MT.LAUREL, N.J. — Fleer Corp. announced that it has made several improvements to its 1992-93 line of NBA basketball cards, which the company introduced in September.

The fronts of the cards feature new team colored-coded graphics and metallic ink boards, while the backs of the cards have larger close-up photos and complete career statistics. The line contains 210 players in the basic set, as well as eight NBA League Leaders, four NBA Award winners, six ProVision Art cards, three Checklist cards, six Schoolyard Stars, and 27 Team Coaches.

In addition, Fleer Wax Packs will feature a special randomly-inserted, limited edition subset of 24 NBA All-Star cards; Fleer Rack Packs will highlight 27 Team Leader cards; and the Fleer pre-priced Cello Packs will offer 10 Rookie Sensation subset cards. All these limited edition subset cards are UV coated and gold-foil stamped for extra impact and collectibility.

Other improvements to the 1992-93 set include a square fold package with high gloss polypropylene film similar to Fleer's 1992 wax baseball and football cards; heat-sealed packs to prevent product tampering; and double coated card stock with high resolution photography and vivid color reproduction on both the front and back of each card.

Larry Johnson, the 1991-92 NBA Rookie of the Year, is also featured in a special 12-card signature series, which has been UV coated and gold-foil stamped. Johnson has personally signed over 2000 of his cards for random distribution in all Fleer's basketball card packs. Fleer will be instituting a special consumer mail-in offer on the back of each pack for three additional Johnson cards and a premiere issue of *NBA Inside Stuff* magazine. A Fleer basketball card sample sheet, containing nine cards, will be included within each copy of the magazine. **#207**

Warner Bros. records adds to Kidsongs line

BURBANK, CALIF. — Warner Bros. Records Family Entertainment (the new children's division of WB Records) has released four new audio cassettes to complement the Kidsongs video series.

Each of the new Kidsongs audio cassettes contains new recordings of favorite children's songs compiled from the Kidsongs home video series. They include "Old MacDonald Had a Farm and Other Favorite Animal Songs," "Cars, Boats, Trains, Planes and Other Things That Go," "Sing Along Songs," and "What I Want To Be When I Grow Up." **#214**

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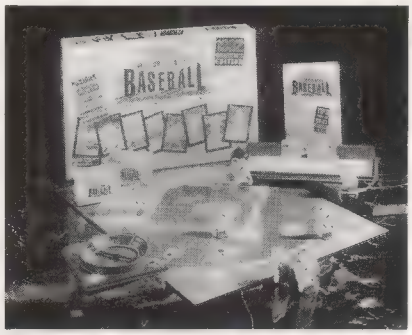
Product News

Classic Games updates baseball trivia game

ATLANTA, GA. — Classic Games has begun shipping its 1992 Collector's Edition Major League Baseball Trivia Board Game. This year's limited production of 125,000 games features new packaging and trivia cards.



Classic's Major League Baseball Trivia game

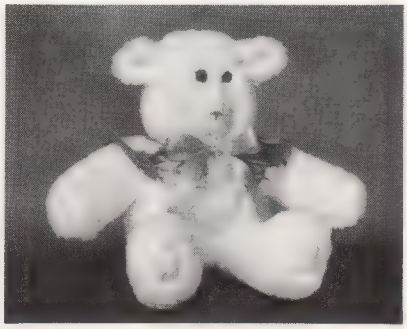
The game includes 200 full-color player trivia cards highlighted by the year's most popular players. The 1992 edition also contains a new collectible book with tips on playing the game from former baseball greats. **#208**

Orchard Valley introduces Woolakins

CLARKESVILLE, GA. — Orchard Valley has introduced Woolakins.

The Woolakins are plush lambkins, entirely hand-constructed in the North Georgia mountains, of the highest quality apparel shearling. This not only gives it a rugged, long lasting quality, but also gives it the look of real sheep wool.

Hand-constructed, hand-sculpted, and hand-painted for that 'one of a kind' look, each is machine wash and dryable. It is available in white or black face. It is arrayed in a floral color tied with ribbon, or country patterned bowtie. Each Woolakin comes with a flock record suitable for framing, small booklet, and feed bag. Woolakins have a suggested retail price of $45.50. **#251**



Woolakins, from Orchard Valley

Polyvel is making scents for toy manufacturers

HAMMONTON, N.J. — Polyvel Inc. can add a special touch to plastic toy parts. Polyvel's fragrance concentrates can be incorporated into any plastic part which is manufactured using polyethylene, polypropylene, PVC, EVA, styrene copolymers, or cellulose acetate butelate. Through the use of Polyvel's "loaded" fragrance concentrates, the cost of enhancing a product with fragrance can be relatively small.

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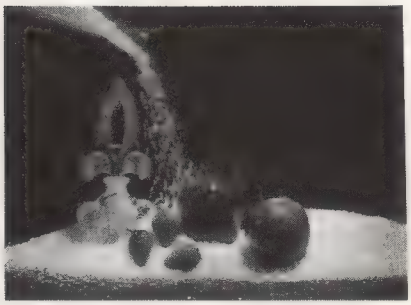

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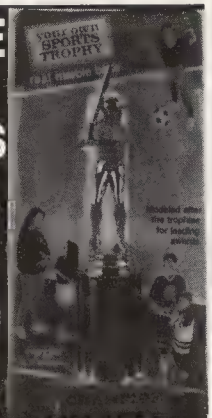

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Product News

Fleer Corp. unveils Ultra Football Cards

PHILADELPHIA — The Fleer Corporation has introduced its 1992 Fleer Ultra Football Cards. The set is being billed by the company as "the highest quality card Fleer produces." Included in the 450-card collection are: two limited edition, 10-card signature series devoted to a couple of the National Football League's hottest players, Reggie White, defensive end of the Philadelphia Eagles and Chris Miller, quarterback of the Atlanta Falcons; a 30-card Ultra Draft Picks set, which features such number one draft picks as Terrel Buckley of the Green Bay Packers and Chris Mims of the San Diego Chargers; and, a limited edition, 10-card Ultra Award Winners subset.

Like Fleer's Ultra Baseball Cards, the Ultra Football Cards feature high-gloss, U.V. coating, gold foil stamping, and marbleized borders on both sides. On the back of each card is an array of design enhancements, including a special football gridiron image; high tech computer graphics; and a horizontal format.

Larger color action pictures of each player grace the front of each card, while two large color pictures — a sharp action shot and a player portrait — appear on the back. **#217**

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Nylint Toys takes a ride with Thomas the Tank

ROCKFORD, ILL.— Nylint Toys has added ten new Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends toys to its preschool line based on the award winning PBS series Shining Time Station.

This year's introductions include: a Deluxe Collector Case; a Thomas Pull-a-Long Wagon with Building Blocks; the Toby Battery Operated Playset; the Percy Battery Operated Playset; Percy with Two Foolish Freight Cars; Thomas, Annie & Clarabel Train Set; Toby, Henrietta & Troublesome Truck; Percy the Small Engine; Harold the Helicopter; and the Thomas Activity Center. Nylint now offers 17 Thomas the Tank preschool toys.**#218**

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Product News

Upper Deck launches two-in-one football card set

CARLSBAD, CA — Upper Deck has launched its 1992 NFL Low Series Football cards, featuring two sets in one.

The Upper Deck 400-card low series Silver set is randomly inserted in 15-card foil packs. Included are such backfield superstars as Thurman Thomas, Barry Sanders, and Emmitt Smith, cornerback Terrel Buckley, quarterbacks John Elway and Mark Rypien, plus many rookie stars.

Also included in the Silver set are Football Heroes, a 10-card insert set depicting the record breaking former Chicago Bears running back Walter Payton during various stages of his career. In addition, the 15-card Pro Bowl insert set features stars from the 1992 Pro Bowl in Hawaii. The Game Breakers subset features four hologram cards of wide receivers Haywood Jeffires, Art Monk, Andre Rison, and Michael Irvin.

Upper Deck has also released a completely separate, limited edition Gold set for the Low Series that showcases 50 of the finest NFL players in their own distinct 15-card foil packs, randomly included in Upper Deck foil boxes. Stars appearing in this set include Joe Montana, Boomer Esiason, David Klingler, Lawrence Taylor, and Bruce Smith. **#219**

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Hart Enterprises shows the power of the pen

VANCOUVER, WASH. — Hart Enterprises' Squiggle Wiggle Writer is a motorized pen that vibrates and turns a straight line into a series of loops, waves, circles.

Hart's Squiggle Wiggle Writer

With over four million sold, the Squiggle Wiggle Writer is a lead novelty item at such retailers as Wal-mart, Coach House Gifts, Imaginarium and Hallmark Gift stores, according to the company.

The Squiggle Wiggle Writer comes in four different colors with four different pen tips — red, green, black and blue — and runs on one AA battery (not included). Approximate retail is $7. **#210**

Bogner Entertainment puts home safety on video

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. — "Mr. Baby Proofer," a video guide to finding and fixing potential child hazards around the home, will be released by Bogner Entertainment Inc. This 30-minute video features Danny McNeill, an authority on child safety, who shows parents how to create a baby-safe environment.

McNeill takes the viewer on a room-by-room inspection of a home, pointing out hazards and presenting practical solutions. Topics covered include the proper installation of acrylic panels on stair railing, the value of stairway gates, the maintenance of safe electrical outlets and more.

McNeill, a former Hollywood stuntman, has been dubbed "baby proofer to the stars" and his Los Angeles-based organization, Baby Proofer International, provides a nationwide network of professionally-trained baby proofers. The program has a suggested retail price of $19.95. **#216**

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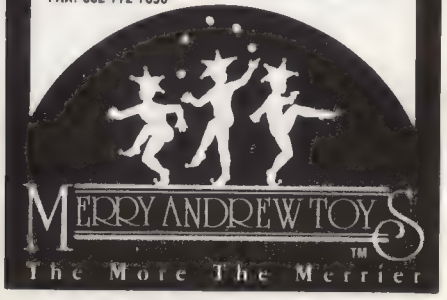
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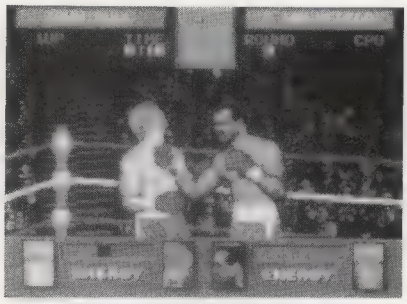
Product News

Sega gets in the ring with the 'Real Deal'

REDWOOD CITY, CALIF. — Sega of America has joined forces with the present undisputed World Heavyweight Champion, to deliver Evander Holyfield's "Real Deal" Boxing for the Genesis video game system.



Evander Holyfield's "Real Deal" Boxing

This new sports title features a new trunks-up perspective, and 360 degrees of ring movement. Players can create their own contender by choosing a name, hands, head, skin color, hair and trunks for their boxer. They then balance the fighter's power, stamina, speed and defense.

The action is furious and the up-close view captures every drop of sweat and blood. Players can pump their fighters up with Holyfield-like training methods, challenge opponents in exhibition bouts, and fight through 28 top-ranked bruisers to face the champ himself in a title match. **#202**

SET Enterprises looks for the perfect match

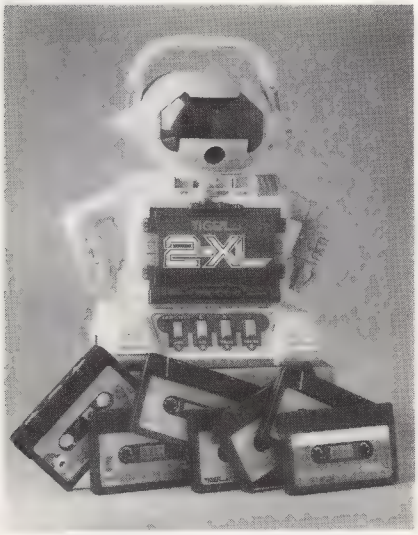
NEW YORK — SET, a family game of visual perception, recently made its network television debut on a segment of CBS This Morning. The game, which is a board game without a board, was presented in an interview with *Parents Magazine* columnist and educational expert, Julie Creighton.

SET, invented by East Lansing, Mich., geneticist Marsha J. Falco, is based on the mathematical concept of set theory. The game uses 81 bridge-sized playing cards printed with symbols referred to as ovals, diamonds, and squiggles. Each shape is portrayed in red, green, or purple, and each color has gradations — solid, shaded, and outline. The additional variable is number or quantity of shapes per card — one, two, or three. The object is to find sets of three when 12 cards are laid out on a table. The first player to find a "Set" announces it and removes it from the playing surface. The player with the most "Sets" at the end of the deck wins.

SET retails in the $12 range, and is represented by The Starting 9 Inc. **#220**

Tiger Electronics Inc. brings back 2-XL

VERNON HILLS, ILL. — Tiger Electronics is reintroducing the 2-XL talking robot to a new generation of children who can communicate with it about a variety of topics, from sports to animals to history. Originally introduced in the mid-1970's, today's redesigned and updated 2-XL incorporates advanced interactive and user-friendly technology.



2-XL from Tiger Electronics

The personable robot communicates through a series of audio cassette tapes. Each program has about 30 minutes of questions and answers, highlighted with jokes and funny comments. Questions are asked verbally by 2-XL and answers are entered via multiple choice, true/false and yes/no buttons located on the robot. 2-XL even remembers how well a player has done and offers comical, witty responses, words of encouragement and occasional friendly teasing between questions.

2-XL is now available at a suggested retail price around $45. Additional cassettes are available for about $6 each. **#203**

LGB is making noise with new Sound Car

HARRISBURG, PA. — LGB has introduced the 4268S Cattle Sound Car, the first in LGB's new line of sound cars.

The 4268S is an American-prototype, wood-sided cattle car. Hidden inside are advanced sound electronics that generate the sounds of cattle. No special installation is required. Just connect two leads from the car to the lighting sockets already installed on the back of most LGB locomotives. An easy-to-reach volume control mounted inside the side door allows the volume to be adjusted for different conditions. **#215**

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11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Signed: Joseph A. Sucamele, Publisher

In Brief

Educational Insights' GeoSafari has received the Seal of Approval from the National Parenting Center in the U.S., a Gold Award from *What toy* in the U.K., and "Toy of the Year" in the Netherlands... **Ero Industries** has relocated its corporate office to 585 Slawin Court, Mount Prospect, Ill. 60056-2183. The new phone number is (708) 803-9200, and fax is (708) 803-9223... **Tyco Toys** is consolidating its European product advertising with Bozell Worldwide Inc. effective January 1, 1993. Bozell Worldwide is the agency of record for Tyco in the U.S., and will continue in that role... The **Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA)** has released birth statistics for the 12-month period ended February 1992. An estimated 4.11 million live births occurred during that period, a decrease of one percent from the 4.17 births of the previous 12-month period... **Texas Instruments** has offered to replace some parts of its electronic Musical Shape & Sort toy that could break and be a choking hazard to children. Replacement parts can be ordered by calling 1-800-842-2737... **Pressman Toys** has awarded its $5 million advertising account to Berenter Greenhouse & Webster... **Mattel Inc.** and **Kenner Products** have agreed to settle a copyright dispute involving Mattel's Barbie and Kenner's Miss America dolls. Mattel has alleged, and a U.S. Customs hearing officer later agreed, that the heads of the five Miss America dolls look too much like Barbie's... **Educational Insights** has established a toll-free fax line (800-995-0506) and a new, toll-free Customer Service/Order Hotline (800-995-4436), providing access to Order Desk reps devoted to quickly processing dealer orders... Dick Walther has been named toy buyer for **J.T.'s General Store**, a home-delivery service... Thomas Michon, age 5 from Irvine, Calif., and Neil Nastanski, 9, from Orchard Lake, Mich., have been named the world's best **Lego** builders at the World Cup competition at Legoland Park in Billund, Denmark... **Classic Games** is offering a toll free information phone line (1-800-486-4263) for Classic Best collectors who find an autographed Mike Schmidt, Nolan Ryan, Ken Griffey Jr., Brien Taylor or David McCarty card, randomly inserted in the 1992 Classic Best Minor League Baseball series. Collectors can obtain a certificate of authenticity from Classic and register as owners... **Fisher-Price** announced that it is conducting a safety campaign for its model number 9104 Deluxe (Bolster) Car Seats manufactured between June 15, 1992 and Sept. 4, 1992. The company has learned that the red button on the seat's buckle pops up, preventing the buckle from latching. Consumers should call Fisher-Price toll-free at 1-800-432-5437 for information about modification or replacement of the seat.

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Jim Henson Productions forms new record label

NEW YORK — Jim Henson Productions has announced the formation of a new record label, Jim Henson Records, which will be launched in association with the Bertelsmann Music Group (BMG).

The label is being licensed to BMG under a five-year agreement for worldwide distribution. Zoom Express, a label in the BMG Kidz family, will lend administrative and operational support to the effort.

Jim Henson Records will bring to the public for the first time the complete collection of award-winning songs from "The Muppet Show," "Muppet Babies," and "Fraggle Rock," as well as gold and platinum-selling albums from its television and film productions. The new label features Grammy award-winning composers Paul Williams, Joe Raposo, Jeffrey Moss, and Kenny Ascher.

In addition, Jim Henson Records will present new all-star compilations as well as never-before-released performances by Jim Henson himself, according to the announcement by Brian Henson, president and CEO of Jim Henson Productions.

Jim Henson's Muppet cast

New company offers licensing services

MUNICH — Merchandising Munchen, KG, of Munich, and Equity Marketing Inc., of New York, have announced the formation of Hollywood Promotions to offer full promotional services throughout Europe.

Hollywood Promotions, based in Munich, is an equally owned joint venture of Merchandising Munchen and Equity Marketing. As a totally integrated promotion company, it will provide service to companies seeking to use licensed properties, particularly characters from TV and film, to help meet their marketing objectives.

On Jan. 1, 1993, trade barriers will fall among the European Community's 12 member nations of Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, The United Kingdom, Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, and the Irish Republic.

The new company will provide European marketers with promotional services and support, including strategic planning, review and acquisition of licensed properties, design and manufacture of premiums, design of packaging, point-of-sale, trade incentives, and promotional tie-ins.

The Hollywood Promotions company will be co-directed by Ulrich Klein, of Merchandising Munchen, and Joseph Conforti, of Equity Marketing.

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Ground rules for launching a business

Setting goals for your new venture helps avoid numerous pitfalls

By Richard Blank

Starting a new business is an important and exciting event. However, you incur many responsibilities that the average wage earner does not want to cope with. You must condition yourself to face the responsibilities no matter what happens. Very few businesses are immediately successful. It takes planning, financial investment, hard work, intuitiveness, the ability to change direction if you have to, creativeness, business sense, and luck.

Many businesses face adversity because of their newness. The founder must be able to do every job that other executives, salesmen, or marketing people have to do in order to know whether his people are doing the job properly. The reality of problems makes the businessman learn how to face the problems, try to solve them, or seek advice to help him solve them.

Now down to the business part of the planning, and decision-making process. There are steps and the following will help. Some you may have done and some you have not.

Planning for a new business

1. What type of business is it?
2. Is it an old industry or a new industry?
3. Where do you want to establish your business?
4. Is it going to be a corporation, partnership, or individual ownership?
5. How much of your time is it going to require?

Richard Blank is the president of both Direct Communications Corporation, which places TV time for a number of toy manufacturers and retailers, and U.S. Consumer Products, specializing in licensing of new products, character licensing, and toy and game counseling.

6. Do you need employees, how many, and what do you estimate your payroll will be?
7. What other general and administrative expenses do you estimate?
8. How much space will you require and what do you estimate the cost for space will be?
9. What do you estimate the cost of advertising and marketing will be?
10. A) Will you have competitors, how many competitors will you have, who are they, and how much volume do they do? What do you estimate their net profit is? Where are they?
    B) Who are their customers?
    C) Where are their customers?
    D) How big is the total market?
    E) What is the total market that presently uses your type of product?
11. What other types of businesses can use your product?
12. Where will you get your product from?
13. What will your product cost from sources prior to finished manufacture?
14. What do you estimate the cost of your finished product will be?
15. Do you have to sign contracts with your sources of supply?
16. What is the content of the contracts?
17. What is your liability under these contracts?
18. What is your liability to your customers?
19. What type of agreement do you have with your salesmen?
20. What do you have to pay your salesmen?
21. What type of control do you have over your salesmen?
22. What type of information have you given your salesmen?
23. A) Do your salesmen know your market?
    B) Do they know your competitors?
    C) Do they know who to see?
24. Have you given your salesmen names of customers to see?
25. Have you gone out with your salesmen to see potential customers?
26. Do you know who your salesmen are seeing and what the answers were?
27. Do your salesmen use contact and report sheets, and do they submit these reports to you?

Although it seems repetitious, after answering all these questions, list everything you have done.

Define all agreements with everyone regarding shares of stock, salaries, commissions, bonuses and incentives. List all promotional material you have purchased, (catalog sheets, sales promotion materials, etc.). Estimate the costs of some of these materials if acquired in larger quantities.

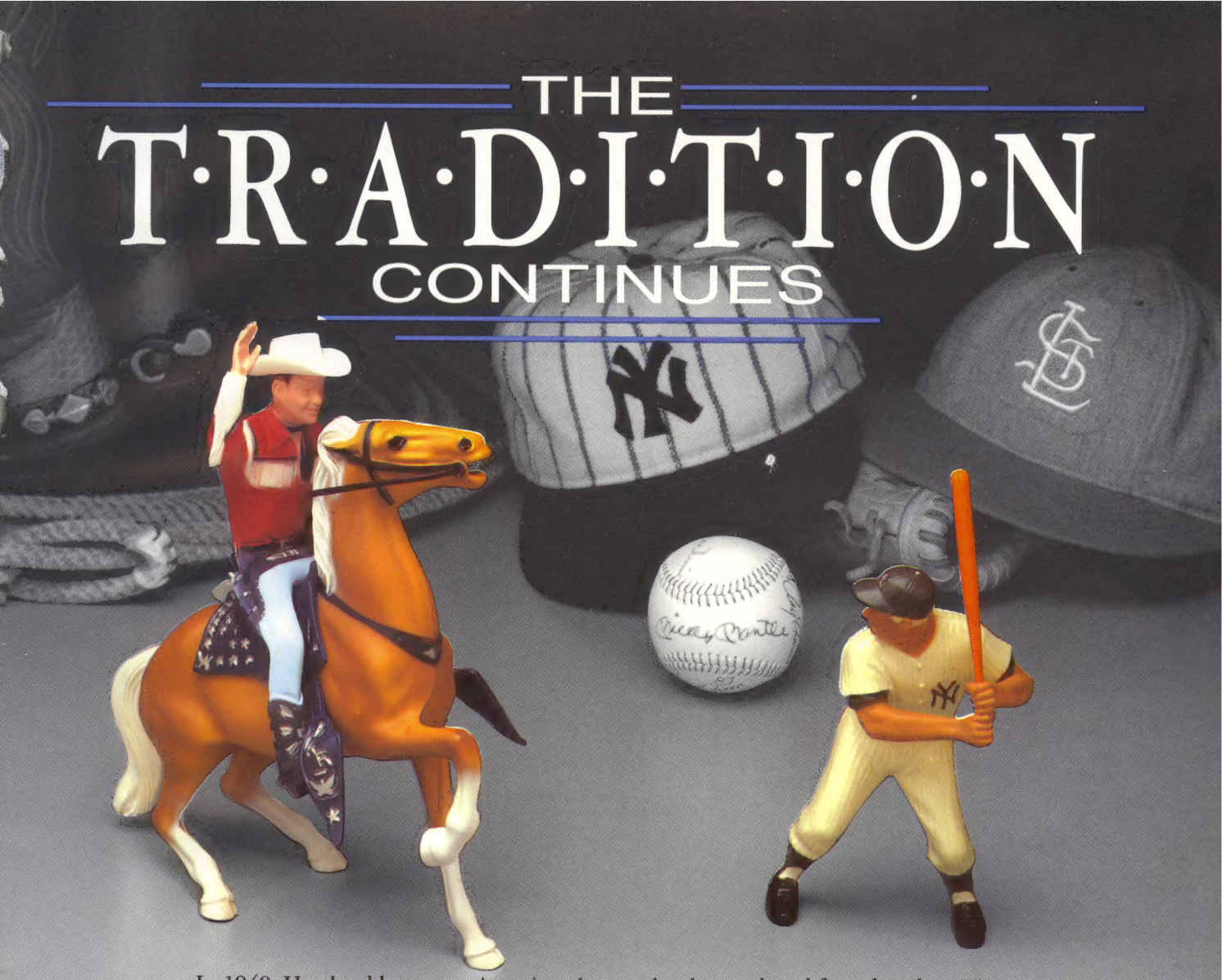
Write an honest analysis of everything you think you did right and what you did wrong, and what you think you should do.

Do an analysis of what you think the profits will be, based on sales estimates versus your expenses. Do not underestimate your business.

These questions should be answered at once. It will help you to understand your business. It will help others to understand your business. It will help you to make the right decisions for your business.

Most of all, it will help you to make your business a success. □

THE T·R·A·D·I·T·I·O·N CONTINUES



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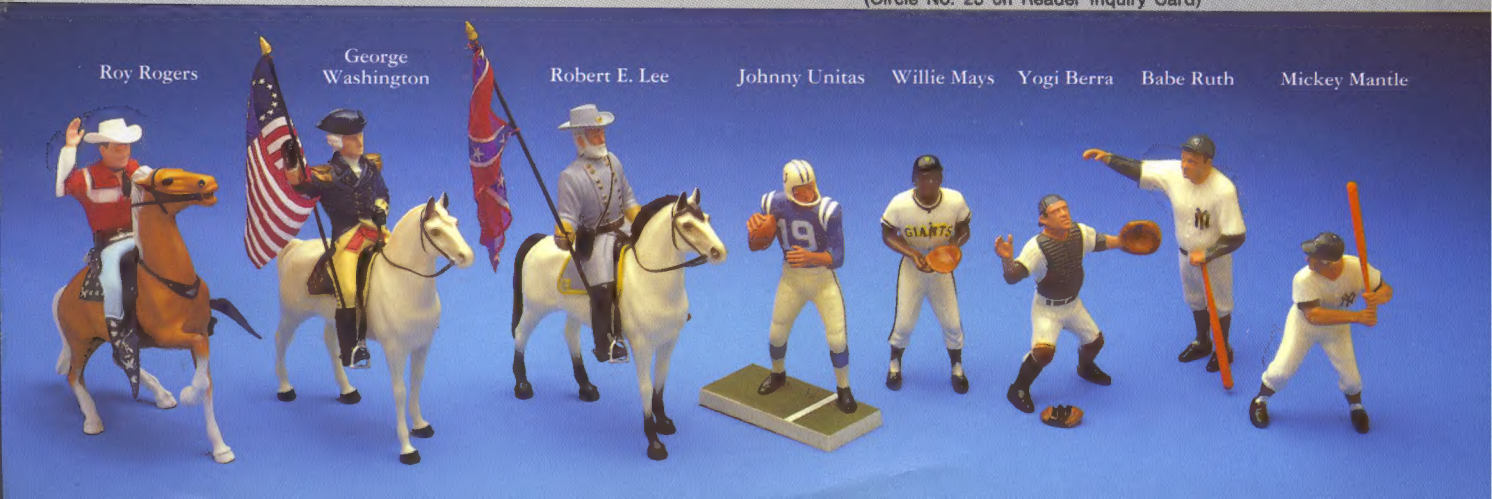

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